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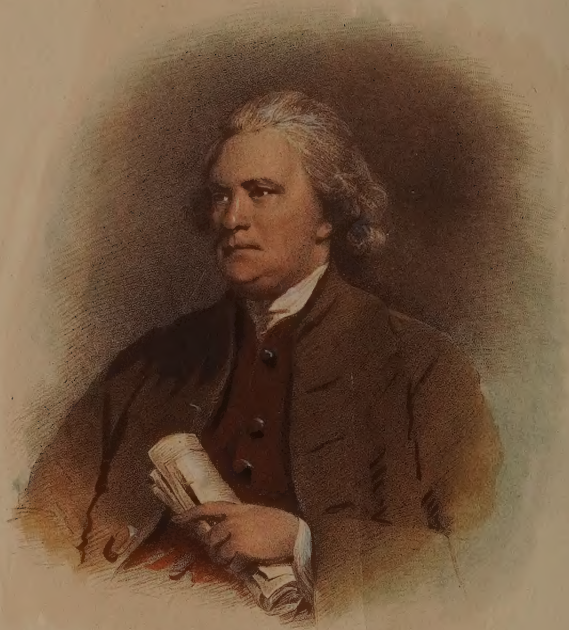

Painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A.

REV. WILLIAM MASON

Works

LIVES OF THE POETS

By SAMUEL JOHNSON

PAFRAETS BOOK COMPANY
TROY NEW YORK

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SAVAGE[a]

IT has been observed, in all ages, that the advantages of nature, or of fortune, have contributed very little to the promotion of happiness; and that those whom the splendour of their rank, or the extent of their capacity, have placed upon the summits of human life, have not often given any just occasion to envy, in those who look up to them from a lower station: whether it be that apparent superiority incites great designs, and great designs

[a] The first edition of this interesting narrative, according to Mr. Boswell, was published in 1744, by Roberts. The second, now before me, bears date 1748, and was published by Cave. Very few alterations were made by the author, when he added it to the present collection. The year before publication, 1743, Dr. Johnson inserted the following notice of his intention in the Gentleman's Magazine.

"MR. URBAN

"As your collections show how often you have owed the ornaments of your poetical pages to the correspondence of the unfortunate and ingenious Mr. Savage, I doubt not but you have so much regard to his memory, as to encourage any design that may have a tendency to the preservation of it from insults or calumnies; and, therefore, with some degree of assurance, intreat you to inform the publick, that his life will speedily be published by a person who was favoured with his confidence, and received from himself an account of most of the transactions which he proposes to mention, to the time of his retirement to Swansea, in Wales.

"From that period to his death in the prison of Bristol, the account will be continued from materials still less liable to objection; his own letters and those of his friends; some of which will be inserted in the work, and abstracts of others subjoined in the margin.

"It may be reasonably imagined that others may have the same design, but as it is not credible that they can obtain the same materials, it must be expected that they will supply from invention the want of intelligence, and that under the title of the Life of Savage, they will publish only a novel, filled with romantick adventures and imaginary amours. You may, therefore, perhaps, gratify the lovers of truth and wit, by giving me leave to inform them, in your magazine, that my account will be published, in octavo, by Mr. Roberts, in Warwick-lane."

are naturally liable to fatal miscarriages; or, that the general lot of mankind is misery, and the misfortunes of those, whose eminence drew upon them an universal attention, have been more carefully recorded, because they were more generally observed, and have, in reality, been only more conspicuous than those of others, not more frequent, or more severe.

That affluence and power, advantages extrinsick and adventitious, and, therefore, easily separable from those by whom they are possessed, should very often flatter the mind with expectations of felicity which they cannot give, raises no astonishment; but it seems rational to hope, that intellectual greatness should produce better effects; that minds qualified for great attainments should first endeavour their own benefit; and that they, who are most able to teach others the way to happiness, should with most certainty follow it themselves.

But this expectation, however plausible, has been very frequently disappointed. The heroes of literary as well as civil history, have been very often no less remarkable for what they have suffered, than for what they have achieved; and volumes have been written only to enumerate the miseries of the learned, and relate their unhappy lives and untimely deaths.

To these mournful narratives, I am about to add the life of Richard Savage, a man whose writings entitle him to an eminent rank in the classes of learning, and whose misfortunes claim a degree of compassion, not always due to the unhappy, as they

were often the consequences of the crimes of others, rather than his own.

In the year 1697, Anne, countess of Macclesfield, having lived, for some time, upon very uneasy terms with her husband, thought a publick confession of adultery the most obvious and expeditious method of obtaining her liberty; and, therefore, declared, that the child, with which she was then great, was begotten by the earl Rivers. This, as may be imagined, made her husband no less desirous of a separation than herself, and he prosecuted his design in the most effectual manner; for he applied not to the ecclesiastical courts for a divorce, but to the parliament for an act, by which his marriage might be dissolved, the nuptial contract totally annulled, and the children of his wife illegitimated. This act, after the usual deliberation, he obtained, though without the approbation of some, who considered marriage as an affair only cognizable by ecclesiastical judges[b]; and, on March 3rd, was separated from his wife, whose fortune, which was very great, was repaid her, and who having, as well as her husband, the liberty of making another choice, was, in a short time, married to colonel Brett.

While the earl of Macclesfield was prosecuting

[b] This year was made remarkable by the dissolution of a marriage solemnized in the face of the church. Salmon's Review.

The following protest is registered in the books of the house of lords:

Dissentient:

Because we conceive that this is the first bill of that nature that hath passed, where there was not a divorce first obtained in the spiritual court; which we look upon as an ill precedent, and may be of dangerous consequence in the future. HALIFAX. ROCHESTER.

this affair, his wife was, on the 10th of January, 1697–8, delivered of a son; and the earl Rivers, by appearing to consider him as his own, left none any reason to doubt of the sincerity of her declaration; for he was his godfather, and gave him his own name, which was, by his direction, inserted in the register of St. Andrew's parish[c] in Holborn, but, unfortunately, left him to the care of his mother, whom, as she was now set free from her husband, he, probably, imagined likely to treat with great tenderness the child that had contributed to so pleasing an event. It is not, indeed, easy to discover what motives could be found to overbalance that natural affection of a parent, or what interest could be promoted by neglect or cruelty. The dread of shame or of poverty, by which some wretches have been incited to abandon or to murder their children, cannot be supposed to have affected a woman who had proclaimed her crimes and solicited reproach, and on whom the clemency of the legislature had undeservedly bestowed a fortune, which would have been very little diminished by the expenses which the care of her child could have brought upon her. It was, therefore, not likely that she would be wicked without temptation; that she would look upon her son, from his birth, with a kind of resentment and abhorrence; and, instead of supporting, assisting, and defending him, delight to see him struggling with misery, or that she would take

[c] See Mr. Boswell's doubts on this head; and the point fully discussed by Malone, and Bindley in the notes to Boswell. Edit. 1816. i. 150, 151. Ed.

every opportunity of aggravating his misfortunes, and obstructing his resources, and, with an implacable and restless cruelty, continue her persecution from the first hour of his life to the last.

But, whatever were her motives, no sooner was her son born, than she discovered a resolution of disowning him; and, in a very short time, removed him from her sight, by committing him to the care of a poor woman, whom she directed to educate him as her own, and enjoined never to inform him of his true parents.

Such was the beginning of the life of Richard Savage. Born with a legal claim to honour and to affluence, he was, in two months, illegitimated by the parliament, and disowned by his mother, doomed to poverty and obscurity, and launched upon the ocean of life, only that he might be swallowed by its quicksands, or dashed upon its rocks.

His mother could not, indeed, infect others with the same cruelty. As it was impossible to avoid the inquiries which the curiosity or tenderness of her relations made after her child, she was obliged to give some account of the measures she had taken; and her mother, the lady Mason, whether in approbation of her design, or to prevent more criminal contrivances, engaged to transact with the nurse, to pay her for her care, and to superintend the education of the child.

In this charitable office she was assisted by his godmother, Mrs. Lloyd, who, while she lived, always looked upon him with that tenderness which

the barbarity of his mother made peculiarly necessary; but her death, which happened in his tenth year, was another of the misfortunes of his childhood; for though she kindly endeavoured to alleviate his loss by a legacy of three hundred pounds, yet, as he had none to prosecute his claim, to shelter him from oppression, or call in law to the assistance of justice, her will was eluded by the executors, and no part of the money was ever paid[d].

He was, however, not yet wholly abandoned. The lady Mason still continued her care, and directed him to be placed at a small grammar-school near St. Alban's, where he was called by the name of his nurse, without the least intimation that he had a claim to any other.

Here he was initiated in literature, and passed through several of the classes, with what rapidity or with what applause cannot now be known. As he always spoke with respect of his master, it is probable that the mean rank, in which he then appeared,

[d] On this circumstance, Boswell founds one of his strongest arguments against Savage's being the son of lady Macclesfield. "If there was such a legacy left," says Boswell, "his not being able to obtain payment of it, must be imputed to his consciousness that he was not the real person. The just inference should be, that, by the death of lady Macclesfield's child before its godmother, the legacy became lapsed; and, therefore, that Johnson's Savage was an impostor. If he had a title to the legacy, he could not have found any difficulty in recovering it; for had the executors resisted his claim, the whole costs, as well as the legacy, must have been paid by them, if he had been the child to whom it was given." With respect for the legal memory of Boswell, we would venture to urge, that the forma pauperis is not the most available mode of addressing an English court; and, therefore, Johnson is not clearly proved wrong by the above argument brought against him. Ed.

did not hinder his genius from being distinguished, or his industry from being rewarded; and if in so low a state he obtained distinction and rewards, it is not likely they were gained but by genius and industry.

It is very reasonable to conjecture, that his application was equal to his abilities, because his improvement was more than proportioned to the opportunities which he enjoyed; nor can it be doubted, that if his earliest productions had been preserved, like those of happier students, we might in some have found vigorous sallies of that sprightly humour which distinguishes the Author to be let, and in others strong touches of that ardent imagination which painted the solemn scenes of the Wanderer.

While he was thus cultivating his genius, his father, the earl Rivers, was seized with a distemper, which, in a short time, put an end to his life[e]. He had frequently inquired after his son, and had always been amused with fallacious and evasive answers; but, being now, in his own opinion, on his deathbed, he thought it his duty to provide for him among his natural children, and, therefore, demanded a positive account of him, with an importunity not to be diverted or denied. His mother, who could no longer refuse an answer, determined, at least, to give such as should cut him off for ever from that happiness which competence affords, and, therefore, declared that he was dead; which is, perhaps, the

[e] He died August 18th, 1712. R.

first instance of a lie invented by a mother to deprive her son of a provision which was designed him by another, and which she could not expect herself, though he should lose it.

This was, therefore, an act of wickedness which could not be defeated, because it could not be suspected; the earl did not imagine there could exist in a human form a mother that would ruin her son without enriching herself, and, therefore, bestowed upon some other person six thousand pounds, which he had in his will bequeathed to Savage.

The same cruelty which incited his mother to intercept this provision which had been intended him, prompted her, in a short time, to another project, a project worthy of such a disposition. She endeavoured to rid herself from the danger of being at any time made known to him, by sending him secretly to the American plantations[f].

By whose kindness this scheme was counteracted, or by what interposition she was induced to lay aside her design, I know not; it is not improbable that the lady Mason might persuade or compel her to desist, or, perhaps, she could not easily find accomplices wicked enough to concur in so cruel an action; for it may be conceived, that those who had, by a long gradation of guilt, hardened their hearts against the sense of common wickedness, would yet be shocked at the design of a mother to expose her son to slavery and want, to expose him without interest, and without provocation; and Savage might,

[f] Savage's preface to his Miscellany.

on this occasion, find protectors and advocates among those who had long traded in crimes, and whom compassion had never touched before.

Being hindered, by whatever means, from banishing him into another country, she formed, soon after, a scheme for burying him in poverty and obscurity in his own; and, that his station of life, if not the place of his residence, might keep him for ever at a distance from her, she ordered him to be placed with a shoemaker in Holborn, that, after the usual time of trial, he might become his apprentice[g].

It is generally reported, that this project was, for some time, successful, and that Savage was employed at the awl longer than he was willing to confess; nor was it, perhaps, any great advantage to him, that an unexpected discovery determined him to quit his occupation.

About this time his nurse, who had always treated him as her own son, died; and it was natural for him to take care of those effects which, by her death, were, as he imagined, become his own: he, therefore, went to her house, opened her boxes, and examined her papers, among which he found some letters written to her by the lady Mason, which informed him of his birth, and the reasons for which it was concealed.

He was no longer satisfied with the employment which had been allotted him, but thought he had a right to share the affluence of his mother; and, therefore, without scruple, applied to her as her son,

[g] Savage's preface to his Miscellany.

and made use of every art to awaken her tenderness, and attract her regard. But neither his letters, nor the interposition of those friends which his merit or his distress procured him, made any impression upon her mind. She still resolved to neglect, though she could no longer disown him.

It was to no purpose that he frequently solicited her to admit him to see her: she avoided him with the most vigilant precaution, and ordered him to be excluded from her house, by whomsoever he might be introduced, and what reason soever he might give for entering it.

Savage was at the same time so touched with the discovery of his real mother, that it was his frequent practice to walk in the dark evenings[h] for several hours before her door, in hopes of seeing her as she might come by accident to the window, or cross her apartment with a candle in her hand.

But all his assiduity and tenderness were without effect, for he could neither soften her heart nor open her hand, and was reduced to the utmost miseries of want, while he was endeavouring to awaken the affection of a mother. He was, therefore, obliged to seek some other means of support; and, having no profession, became, by necessity, an author.

At this time the attention of the literary world was engrossed by the Bangorian controversy, which filled the press with pamphlets, and the coffee-houses with disputants. Of this subject, as most popular, he made choice for his first attempt, and, without

[h] See the Plain Dealer.

any other knowledge of the question than he had casually collected from conversation, published a poem against the bishop[i].

What was the success or merit of this performance, I know not; it was probably lost among the innumerable pamphlets to which that dispute gave occasion. Mr. Savage was himself in a little time ashamed of it, and endeavoured to suppress it, by destroying all the copies that he could collect.

He then attempted a more gainful kind of writing[j], and, in his eighteenth year, offered to the stage a comedy, borrowed from a Spanish plot, which was refused by the players, and was, therefore, given by him to Mr. Bullock, who, having more interest, made some slight alterations, and brought it upon the stage, under the title of Woman's a Riddle[k], but allowed the unhappy author no part of the profit.

Not discouraged, however, at his repulse, he wrote, two years afterwards, Love in a Veil, another comedy, borrowed likewise from the Spanish, but with little better success than before; for, though it was received and acted, yet it appeared so late in the year, that the author obtained no other advantage from it, than the acquaintance of sir Richard Steele, and Mr. Wilks, by whom he was pitied, caressed, and relieved.

[i] The title of this poem was the Convocation, or a Battle of Pamphlets, 1717. J. B.

[j] Jacob's Lives of the Dramatick Poets. Dr. J.

[k] This play was printed first in 8vo.; and afterwards in 12mo. the fifth edition. Dr. J.

Sir Richard Steele, having declared in his favour with all the ardour of benevolence which constituted his character, promoted his interest with the utmost zeal, related his misfortunes, applauded his merit, took all the opportunities of recommending him, and asserted, that "the inhumanity of his mother had given him a right to find every good man his father[1]."

Nor was Mr. Savage admitted to his acquaintance only, but to his confidence, of which he sometimes related an instance too extraordinary to be omitted, as it affords a very just idea of his patron's character.

He was once desired by sir Richard, with an air of the utmost importance, to come very early to his house the next morning. Mr. Savage came as he had promised, found the chariot at the door, and sir Richard waiting for him, and ready to go out. What was intended, and whither they were to go, Savage could not conjecture, and was not willing to inquire; but immediately seated himself with sir Richard. The coachman was ordered to drive, and they hurried, with the utmost expedition, to Hyde-park corner, where they stopped at a petty tavern, and retired to a private room. Sir Richard then informed him, that he intended to publish a pamphlet, and that he had desired him to come thither that he might write for him. They soon sat down to the work. Sir Richard dictated, and Savage wrote, till the dinner that had been ordered was put upon the table. Savage was surprised at the

[1] Plain Dealer. Dr. J.

meanness of the entertainment, and, after some hesitation, ventured to ask for wine, which sir Richard, not without reluctance, ordered to be brought. They then finished their dinner, and proceeded in their pamphlet, which they concluded in the afternoon.

Mr. Savage then imagined his task over, and expected that sir Richard would call for the reckoning, and return home; but his expectations deceived him, for sir Richard told him that he was without money, and that the pamphlet must be sold, before the dinner could be paid for; and Savage was, therefore, obliged to go and offer their new production to sale for two guineas, which, with some difficulty, he obtained. Sir Richard then returned home, having retired that day only to avoid his creditors, and composed the pamphlet only to discharge his reckoning.

Mr. Savage related another fact equally uncommon, which, though it has no relation to his life, ought to be preserved. Sir Richard Steele having one day invited to his house a great number of persons of the first quality, they were surprised at the number of liveries which surrounded the table; and after dinner, when wine and mirth had set them free from the observation of rigid ceremony, one of them inquired of sir Richard, how such an expensive train of domesticks could be consistent with his fortune. Sir Richard very frankly confessed, that they were fellows of whom he would very willingly be rid: and being then asked why he did not discharge them, declared that they were bailiffs, who had introduced themselves with an execution, and

whom, since he could not send them away, he had thought it convenient to embellish with liveries, that they might do him credit while they staid.

His friends were diverted with the expedient, and, by paying the debt, discharged their attendance, having obliged sir Richard to promise that they should never again find him graced with a retinue of the same kind.

Under such a tutor Mr. Savage was not likely to learn prudence or frugality; and, perhaps, many of the misfortunes which the want of those virtues brought upon him in the following parts of his life, might be justly imputed to so unimproving an example.

Nor did the kindness of sir Richard end in common favours. He proposed to have established him in some settled scheme of life, and to have contracted a kind of alliance with him, by marrying him to a natural daughter, on whom he intended to bestow a thousand pounds. But though he was always lavish of future bounties, he conducted his affairs in such a manner, that he was very seldom able to keep his promises or execute his own intentions; and, as he was never able to raise the sum which he had offered, the marriage was delayed. In the mean time he was officiously informed, that Mr. Savage had ridiculed him; by which he was so much exasperated, that he withdrew the allowance which he had paid him, and never afterwards admitted him to his house.

It is not, indeed, unlikely that Savage might, by his imprudence, expose himself to the malice of a

talebearer; for his patron had many follies, which, as his discernment easily discovered, his imagination might sometimes incite him to mention too ludicrously. A little knowledge of the world is sufficient to discover that such weakness is very common, and that there are few who do not sometimes, in the wantonness of thoughtless mirth, or the heat of transient resentment, speak of their friends and benefactors with levity and contempt, though, in their cooler moments, they want neither sense of their kindness, nor reverence for their virtue: the fault, therefore, of Mr. Savage was rather negligence than ingratitude. But sir Richard must, likewise, be acquitted of severity, for who is there that can patiently bear contempt from one whom he has relieved and supported, whose establishment he has laboured, and whose interest he has promoted?

He was now again abandoned to fortune, without any other friend than Mr. Wilks; a man who, whatever were his abilities or skill as an actor, deserves, at least, to be remembered for his virtues[m], which are

[m] As it is a loss to mankind when any good action is forgotten, I shall insert another instance of Mr. Wilks's generosity, very little known. Mr. Smith, a gentleman educated at Dublin, being hindered by an impediment in his pronunciation from engaging in orders, for which his friends designed him, left his own country, and came to London in quest of employment, but found his solicitations fruitless, and his necessities every day more pressing. In this distress he wrote a tragedy, and offered it to the players, by whom it was rejected. Thus were his last hopes defeated, and he had no other prospect than of the most deplorable poverty. But Mr. Wilks thought his performance, though not perfect, at least worthy of some reward, and, therefore, offered him a benefit. This favour he improved with so much diligence, that the house afforded him a considerable sum, with which he went to Leyden, applied himself to the study of phy-

not often to be found in the world, and, perhaps, less often in his profession than in others. To be humane, generous, and candid, is a very high degree of merit in any case; but those qualities deserve still greater praise, when they are found in that condition which makes almost every other man, for whatever reason, contemptuous, insolent, petulant, selfish, and brutal.

As Mr. Wilks was one of those to whom calamity seldom complained without relief, he naturally took an unfortunate wit into his protection, and not only assisted him in any casual distresses, but continued an equal and steady kindness to the time of his death.

By his interposition Mr. Savage once obtained from his mother[n] fifty pounds, and a promise of one hundred and fifty more; but it was the fate of this unhappy man, that few promises of any advantage to him were performed. His mother was infected, among others, with the general madness of the

sick, and prosecuted his design with so much diligence and success, that, when Dr. Boerhaave was desired by the czarina to recommend proper persons to introduce into Russia the practice and study of physick, Dr. Smith was one of those whom he selected. He had a considerable pension settled on him at his arrival, and was one of the chief physicians at the Russian court. Dr. J.

A letter from Dr. Smith, in Russia, to Mr. Wilks, is printed in Chetwood's History of the Stage. R.

[n] "This," says Dr. Johnson, "I write upon the credit of the author of his life, which was published in 1727;" and was a small pamphlet, intended to plead his cause with the publick while under sentence of death "for the murder of Mr. James Sinclair, at Robinson's coffee-house, at Charing-cross, price 6d. Roberts." Savage sent a copy of it to Mrs. Carter, with some corrections and remarks. See his letter to that lady in Mrs. Carter's life by Mr. Pennington, vol. i. p. 58.

South-sea traffick; and, having been disappointed in her expectations, refused to pay what, perhaps, nothing but the prospect of sudden affluence prompted her to promise.

Being thus obliged to depend upon the friendship of Mr. Wilks, he was, consequently, an assiduous frequenter of the theatres; and, in a short time, the amusements of the stage took such possession of his mind, that he never was absent from a play in several years.

This constant attendance naturally procured him the acquaintance of the players; and, among others, of Mrs. Oldfield, who was so much pleased with his conversation, and touched with his misfortunes, that she allowed him a settled pension of fifty pounds a year, which was during her life regularly paid.

That this act of generosity may receive its due praise, and that the good actions of Mrs. Oldfield may not be sullied by her general character, it is proper to mention what Mr. Savage often declared, in the strongest terms, that he never saw her alone, or in any other place than behind the scenes.

At her death he endeavoured to show his gratitude in the most decent manner, by wearing mourning, as for a mother; but did not celebrate her in elegies°, because he knew that too great profusion of praise would only have revived those faults which his natural equity did not allow him to think less, because they were committed by one who favoured

° Chetwood, however, has printed a poem on her death, which he ascribes to Mr. Savage. See History of the Stage, p. 206. R.

him; but of which, though his virtue would not endeavour to palliate them, his gratitude would not suffer him to prolong the memory, or diffuse the censure. In his Wanderer, he has, indeed, taken an opportunity of mentioning her; but celebrates her not for her virtue, but her beauty, an excellence which none ever denied her: this is the only encomium with which he has rewarded her liberality; and, perhaps, he has, even in this, been too lavish of his praise. He seems to have thought, that never to mention his benefactress would have an appearance of ingratitude, though to have dedicated any particular performance to her memory would have only betrayed an officious partiality, that, without exalting her character, would have depressed his own.

He had sometimes, by the kindness of Mr. Wilks, the advantage of a benefit, on which occasions he often received uncommon marks of regard and compassion; and was once told, by the duke of Dorset, that it was just to consider him as an injured nobleman; and that, in his opinion, the nobility ought to think themselves obliged, without solicitation, to take every opportunity of supporting him by their countenance and patronage. But he had generally the mortification to hear, that the whole interest of his mother was employed to frustrate his applications, and that she never left any expedient untried, by which he might be cut off from the possibility of supporting life. The same disposition she endeavoured to diffuse among all those over whom nature or fortune gave her any influence; and, indeed, suc-

ceeded too well in her design; but could not always propagate her effrontery with her cruelty; for some of those, whom she incited against him, were ashamed of their own conduct, and boasted of that relief which they never gave him.

In this censure I do not indiscriminately involve all his relations; for he has mentioned, with gratitude, the humanity of one lady, whose name I am now unable to recollect, and to whom, therefore, I cannot pay the praises which she deserves, for having acted well, in opposition to influence, precept, and example.

The punishment which our laws inflict upon those parents who murder their infants, is well known; nor has its justice ever been contested; but, if they deserve death who destroy a child in its birth, what pains can be severe enough for her who forbears to destroy him, only to inflict sharper miseries upon him; who prolongs his life, only to make him miserable; and who exposes him, without care and without pity, to the malice of oppression, the caprices of chance, and the temptations of poverty; who rejoices to see him overwhelmed with calamities; and, when his own industry, or the charity of others, has enabled him to rise, for a short time, above his miseries, plunges him again into his former distress?

The kindness of his friends not affording him any constant supply, and the prospect of improving his fortune by enlarging his acquaintance necessarily leading him to places of expense, he found it neces-

sary[p] to endeavour, once more, at dramatick poetry, for which he was now better qualified, by a more extensive knowledge and longer observation. But having been unsuccessful in comedy, though rather for want of opportunities than genius, he resolved now to try whether he should not be more fortunate in exhibiting a tragedy.

The story which he chose for the subject, was that of sir Thomas Overbury, a story well adapted to the stage, though, perhaps, not far enough removed from the present age to admit properly the fictions necessary to complete the plan; for the mind, which naturally loves truth, is always most offended with the violation of those truths of which we are most certain; and we, of course, conceive those facts most certain which approach nearest to our own time.

Out of this story he formed a tragedy, which, if the circumstances in which he wrote it be considered, will afford, at once, an uncommon proof of strength of genius, and evenness of mind, of a serenity not to be ruffled, and an imagination not to be suppressed.

During a considerable part of the time in which he was employed upon this performance, he was without lodging, and often without meat; nor had he any other conveniences for study than the fields or the streets allowed him: there he used to walk and form his speeches, and, afterwards, step into a shop, beg for a few moments the use of the pen and ink, and write down what he had composed, upon paper which he had picked up by accident.

[p] In 1724.

If the performance of a writer thus distressed is not perfect, its faults ought, surely, to be imputed to a cause very different from want of genius, and must rather excite pity than provoke censure.

But when, under these discouragements, the tragedy was finished, there yet remained the labour of introducing it on the stage; an undertaking, which, to an ingenious mind, was, in a very high degree, vexatious and disgusting; for, having little interest or reputation, he was obliged to submit himself wholly to the players, and admit, with whatever reluctance, the amendations of Mr. Cibber, which he always considered as the disgrace of his performance.

He had, indeed, in Mr. Hill, another critick of a very different class, from whose friendship he received great assistance on many occasions, and whom he never mentioned but with the utmost tenderness and regard. He had been for some time distinguished by him with very particular kindness, and on this occasion it was natural to apply to him, as an author of an established character. He, therefore, sent this tragedy to him, with a short copy of verses[q], in which he desired his correction. Mr. Hill, whose humanity and politeness are generally known, readily complied with his request; but, as he is remarkable for singularity of sentiment, and bold experiments in language, Mr. Savage did not think his play much improved by his innovation, and had, even at that time, the courage to reject several passages which he could not approve; and, what is still more laud-

[q] Printed in the late collection of his poems.

able, Mr. Hill had the generosity not to resent the neglect of his alterations, but wrote the prologue and epilogue, in which he touches on the circumstances of the author with great tenderness.

After all these obstructions and compliances, he was only able to bring his play upon the stage in the summer, when the chief actors had retired, and the rest were in possession of the house for their own advantage. Among these, Mr. Savage was admitted to play the part of sir Thomas Overbury[r], by which he gained no great reputation, the theatre being a province for which nature seemed not to have designed him; for neither his voice, look, nor gesture, were such as were expected on the stage; and he was so much ashamed of having been reduced to appear as a player, that he always blotted out his name from the list, when a copy of his tragedy was to be shown to his friends.

In the publication of his performance he was more successful, for the rays of genius that glimmered in it, that glimmered through all the mists which poverty and Cibber had been able to spread over it, procured him the notice and esteem of many persons eminent for their rank, their virtue, and their wit.

Of this play, acted, printed, and dedicated, the accumulated profits arose to a hundred pounds, which he thought at that time a very large sum, having been never master of so much before.

[r] It was acted only three nights, the first on June 12, 1723. When the house opened for the winter season it was once more performed for the author's benefit, Oct. 2. R.

In the dedication[s], for which he received ten guineas, there is nothing remarkable. The preface contains a very liberal encomium on the blooming excellencies of Mr. Theophilus Cibber, which Mr. Savage could not in the latter part of his life see his friends about to read without snatching the play out of their hands. The generosity of Mr. Hill did not end on this occasion; for afterwards, when Mr. Savage's necessities returned, he encouraged a subscription to a Miscellany of Poems in a very extraordinary manner, by publishing his story in the Plain Dealer[t], with some affecting lines, which he asserts to have been written by Mr. Savage upon the treatment received by him from his mother, but of which he was himself the author, as Mr. Savage afterwards declared. These lines, and the paper in which they were inserted, had a very powerful effect upon all but his mother, whom, by making her cruelty more publick, they only hardened in her aversion.

Mr. Hill not only promoted the subscription to the Miscellany, but furnished likewise the greatest part of the poems of which it is composed, and particularly the Happy Man, which he published as a specimen.

The subscriptions of those whom these papers should influence to patronise merit in distress, with-

[s] To Herbert Tryst, esq. of Herefordshire. Dr. J.

The Plain Dealer was a periodical paper, written by Mr. Hill and Mr. Bond, whom Savage called the two contending powers of light and darkness. They wrote, by turns, each six essays; and the character of the work was observed regularly to rise in Mr. Hill's weeks, and fall in Mr. Bond's. Dr. J.

out any other solicitation, were directed to be left at Button's coffee-house; and Mr. Savage going thither a few days afterwards, without expectation of any effect from his proposal, found to his surprise seventy guineas[u], which had been sent him in consequence of the compassion excited by Mr. Hill's pathetick representation.

To this Miscellany he wrote a preface, in which he gives an account of his mother's cruelty in a very uncommon strain of humour, and with a gaiety of imagination, which the success of his subscription probably produced.

The dedication is addressed to the lady Mary Wortley Montague, whom he flatters without reserve, and, to confess the truth, with very little art[v]. The same observation may be extended to all his

[u] The names of those who so generously contributed to his relief having been mentioned in a former account, ought not to be omitted here. They were the dutchess of Cleveland, lady Cheyney, lady Castlemain, lady Gower, lady Lechmere, the dutchess dowager and dutchess of Rutland, lady Strafford, the countess dowager of Warwick, Mrs. Mary Floyer, Mrs. Sofuel Noel, duke of Rutland, lord Gainsborough, lord Milsington, Mr. John Savage. Dr. J.

[v] This the following extract from it will prove:

—"Since our country has been honoured with the glory of your wit, as elevated and immortal as your soul, it no longer remains a doubt whether your sex have strength of mind in proportion to their sweetness. There is something in your verses as distinguished as your air. They are as strong as truth, as deep as reason, as clear as innocence, and as smooth as beauty. They contain a nameless and peculiar mixture of force and grace, which is at once so movingly serene, and so majestically lovely, that it is too amiable to appear any where but in your eyes and in your writings."

"As fortune is not more my enemy than I am the enemy of flattery, I know not how I can forbear this application to your ladyship, because there is scarce a possibility that I should say more than I believe, when I am speaking of your excellence." Dr. J.

dedications: his compliments are constrained and violent, heaped together without the grace of order, or the decency of introduction: he seems to have written his panegyricks for the perusal only of his patrons, and to have imagined that he had no other task than to pamper them with praises, however gross, and that flattery would make its way to the heart, without the assistance of elegance or invention.

Soon afterwards the death of the king furnished a general subject for a poetical contest, in which Mr. Savage engaged, and is allowed to have carried the prize of honour from his competitors: but I know not whether he gained by his performance any other advantage than the increase of his reputation; though it must certainly have been with further views that he prevailed upon himself to attempt a species of writing, of which all the topicks had been long before exhausted, and which was made at once difficult by the multitudes that had failed in it, and those that had succeeded.

He was now advancing in reputation, and though frequently involved in very distressful perplexities, appeared, however, to be gaining upon mankind, when both his fame and his life were endangered by an event, of which it is not yet determined, whether it ought to be mentioned as a crime or a calamity.

On the 20th of November, 1727, Mr. Savage came from Richmond, where he then lodged, that he might pursue his studies with less interruption, with an intent to discharge another lodging which he had in Westminster; and accidentally meeting two gentle-

men, his acquaintances, whose names were Merchant and Gregory, he went in with them to a neighbouring coffee-house, and sat drinking till it was late, it being in no time of Mr. Savage's life any part of his character to be the first of the company that desired to separate. He would willingly have gone to bed in the same house; but there was not room for the whole company, and, therefore, they agreed to ramble about the streets, and divert themselves with such amusements as should offer themselves till morning.

In this walk they happened unluckily to discover a light in Robinson's coffee-house, near Charing-cross, and, therefore, went in. Merchant, with some rudeness, demanded a room, and was told that there was a good fire in the next parlour, which the company were about to leave, being then paying their reckoning. Merchant, not satisfied with this answer, rushed into the room, and was followed by his companions. He then petulantly placed himself between the company and the fire, and soon after kicked down the table. This produced a quarrel, swords were drawn on both sides, and one Mr. James Sinclair was killed. Savage, having likewise wounded a maid that held him, forced his way with Merchant out of the house; but being intimidated and confused, without resolution either to fly or stay, they were taken in a back court by one of the company, and some soldiers, whom he had called to his assistance.

Being secured and guarded that night, they were

in the morning carried before three justices, who committed them to the Gate-house, from whence, upon the death of Mr. Sinclair, which happened the same day, they were removed in the night to Newgate, where they were, however, treated with some distinction, exempted from the ignominy of chains, and confined, not among the common criminals, but in the press-yard.

When the day of trial came, the court was crowded in a very unusual manner; and the publick appeared to interest itself, as in a cause of general concern. The witnesses against Mr. Savage and his friends were, the woman who kept the house, which was a house of ill-fame, and her maid, the men who were in the room with Mr. Sinclair, and a woman of the town, who had been drinking with them, and with whom one of them had been seen in bed. They swore in general, that Merchant gave the provocation, which Savage and Gregory drew their swords to justify; that Savage drew first, and that he stabbed Sinclair when he was not in a posture of defence, or while Gregory commanded his sword; that after he had given the thrust he turned pale, and would have retired, but that the maid clung round him, and one of the company endeavoured to detain him, from whom he broke, by cutting the maid on the head, but was afterwards taken in a court.

There was some difference in their depositions; one did not see Savage give the wound, another saw it given when Sinclair held his point towards the

ground; and the woman of the town asserted, that she did not see Sinclair's sword at all: this difference, however, was very far from amounting to inconsistency; but it was sufficient to show that the hurry of the dispute was such, that it was not easy to discover the truth with relation to particular circumstances, and that, therefore, some deductions were to be made from the credibility of the testimonies.

Sinclair had declared several times before his death, that he received his wound from Savage; nor did Savage at his trial deny the fact, but endeavoured partly to extenuate it, by urging the suddenness of the whole action, and the impossibility of any ill design, or premeditated malice; and partly to justify it by the necessity of self-defence, and the hazard of his own life, if he had lost that opportunity of giving the thrust: he observed, that neither reason nor law obliged a man to wait for the blow which was threatened, and which, if he should suffer it, he might never be able to return; that it was always allowable to prevent an assault, and to preserve life by taking away that of the adversary by whom it was endangered.

With regard to the violence with which he endeavoured to escape, he declared, that it was not his design to fly from justice, or decline a trial, but to avoid the expenses and severities of a prison; and that he intended to have appeared at the bar without compulsion.

This defence, which took up more than an hour,

was heard by the multitude that thronged the court with the most attentive and respectful silence; those who thought he ought not to be acquitted, owned that applause could not be refused him; and those who before pitied his misfortunes, now reverenced his abilities.

The witnesses which appeared against him were proved to be persons of characters which did not entitle them to much credit; a common strumpet, a woman by whom strumpets were entertained, and a man by whom they were supported: and the character of Savage was, by several persons of distinction, asserted to be that of a modest inoffensive man, not inclined to broils or to insolence, and who had, to that time, been only known for his misfortunes and his wit.

Had his audience been his judges, he had undoubtedly been acquitted; but Mr. Page, who was then upon the bench, treated him with his usual insolence and severity, and when he had summed up the evidence, endeavoured to exasperate the jury, as Mr. Savage used to relate it, with this eloquent harangue:

"Gentlemen of the jury, you are to consider that Mr. Savage is a very great man, a much greater man than you or I, gentlemen of the jury; that he wears very fine clothes, much finer clothes than you or I, gentlemen of the jury; that he has abundance of money in his pocket, much more money than you or I, gentlemen of the jury; but, gentlemen of the jury, is it not a very hard case, gentlemen of

the jury, that Mr. Savage should, therefore, kill you or me, gentlemen of the jury?''

Mr. Savage, hearing his defence thus misrepresented, and the men who were to decide his fate incited against him by invidious comparisons, resolutely asserted, that his cause was not candidly explained, and began to recapitulate what he had before said with regard to his condition, and the necessity of endeavouring to escape the expenses of imprisonment; but the judge having ordered him to be silent, and repeated his orders without effect, commanded that he should be taken from the bar by force.

The jury then heard the opinion of the judge, that good characters were of no weight against positive evidence, though they might turn the scale where it was doubtful; and that though, when two men attack each other, the death of either is only manslaughter; but where one is the aggressor, as in the case before them, and, in pursuance of his first attack, kills the other, the law supposes the action, however sudden, to be malicious. They then deliberated upon their verdict, and determined that Mr. Savage and Mr. Gregory were guilty of murder; and Mr. Merchant, who had no sword, only of manslaughter.

Thus ended this memorable trial, which lasted eight hours. Mr. Savage and Mr. Gregory were conducted back to prison, where they were more closely confined, and loaded with irons of fifty pounds' weight: four days afterwards they were

sent back to the court to receive sentence; on which occasion Mr. Savage made, as far as it could be retained in memory, the following speech:

"It is now, my lord, too late to offer any thing by way of defence or vindication; nor can we expect from your lordships, in this court, but the sentence which the law requires you, as judges, to pronounce against men of our calamitous condition. But we are also persuaded, that as mere men, and out of this seat of rigorous justice, you are susceptive of the tender passions, and too humane not to commiserate the unhappy situation of those, whom the law sometimes, perhaps — exacts — from you to pronounce upon. No doubt, you distinguish between offences which arise out of premeditation, and a disposition habituated to vice or immorality, and transgressions, which are the unhappy and unforeseen effects of casual absence of reason, and sudden impulse of passion; we, therefore, hope you will contribute all you can to an extension of that mercy, which the gentlemen of the jury have been pleased to show Mr. Merchant, who (allowing facts as sworn against us by the evidence) has led us into this our calamity. I hope this will not be construed as if we meant to reflect upon that gentleman, or remove any thing from us upon him, or that we repine the more at our fate, because he has no participation of it: no, my lord; for my part, I declare nothing could more soften my grief than to be without any companion in so great a misfortune[w]."

[w] Mr. Savage's life.

Mr. Savage had now no hopes of life, but from the mercy of the crown, which was very earnestly solicited by his friends, and which, with whatever difficulty the story may obtain belief, was obstructed only by his mother.

To prejudice the queen against him, she made use of an incident, which was omitted in the order of time, that it might be mentioned together with the purpose which it was made to serve. Mr. Savage, when he had discovered his birth, had an incessant desire to speak to his mother, who always avoided him in publick, and refused him admission into her house. One evening walking, as it was his custom, in the street that she inhabited, he saw the door of her house by accident open; he entered it, and, finding no person in the passage to hinder him, went up stairs to salute her. She discovered him before he could enter her chamber, alarmed the family with the most distressful outcries, and, when she had by her screams gathered them about her, ordered them to drive out of the house that villain, who had forced himself in upon her, and endeavoured to murder her. Savage, who had attempted, with the most submissive tenderness, to soften her rage, hearing her utter so detestable an accusation, thought it prudent to retire; and, I believe, never attempted afterwards to speak to her.

But, shocked as he was with her falsehood and her cruelty, he imagined that she intended no other use of her lie, than to set herself free from his embraces and solicitations, and was very far from sus-

pecting that she would treasure it in her memory as an instrument of future wickedness, or that she would endeavour for this fictitious assault to deprive him of his life.

But when the queen was solicited for his pardon, and informed of the severe treatment which he had suffered from his judge, she answered, that, however unjustifiable might be the manner of his trial, or whatever extenuation the action for which he was condemned might admit, she could not think that man a proper object of the king's mercy, who had been capable of entering his mother's house in the night, with an intent to murder her.

By whom this atrocious calumny had been transmitted to the queen; whether she that invented had the front to relate it; whether she found any one weak enough to credit it, or corrupt enough to concur with her in her hateful design, I know not; but methods had been taken to persuade the queen so strongly of the truth of it, that she, for a long time, refused to hear any of those who petitioned for his life.

Thus had Savage perished by the evidence of a bawd, a strumpet, and his mother, had not justice and compassion procured him an advocate of rank too great to be rejected unheard, and of virtue too eminent to be heard without being believed. His merit and his calamities happened to reach the ear of the countess of Hertford, who engaged in his support with all the tenderness that is excited by pity, and all the zeal which is kindled by generos-

ity; and, demanding an audience of the queen, laid before her the whole series of his mother's cruelty, exposed the improbability of an accusation by which he was charged with an intent to commit a murder that could produce no advantage, and soon convinced her how little his former conduct could deserve to be mentioned as a reason for extraordinary severity.

The interposition of this lady was so successful, that he was soon after admitted to bail, and, on the 9th of March, 1728, pleaded the king's pardon.

It is natural to inquire upon what motives his mother could prosecute him in a manner so outrageous and implacable; for what reason she could employ all the arts of malice, and all the snares of calumny, to take away the life of her own son, of a son who never injured her, who was never supported by her expense, nor obstructed any prospect of pleasure or advantage: why she should endeavour to destroy him by a lie — a lie which could not gain credit, but must vanish of itself at the first moment of examination, and of which only this can be said to make it probable, that it may be observed from her conduct, that the most execrable crimes are sometimes committed without apparent temptation.

This mother is still alive[x], and may, perhaps, even yet, though her malice was so often defeated, enjoy the pleasure of reflecting, that the life, which she often endeavoured to destroy, was, at least, short-

[x] She died October 11, 1753, at her house in Old Bond street, aged above fourscore. R.

ened by her maternal offices; that, though she could not transport her son to the plantations, bury him in the shop of a mechanick, or hasten the hand of the publick executioner, she has yet had the satisfaction of imbittering all his hours, and forcing him into exigencies that hurried on his death.

It is by no means necessary to aggravate the enormity of this woman's conduct, by placing it in opposition to that of the countess of Hertford; no one can fail to observe how much more amiable it is to relieve, than to oppress, and to rescue innocence from destruction, than to destroy without an injury.

Mr. Savage, during his imprisonment, his trial, and the time in which he lay under sentence of death, behaved with great firmness and equality of mind, and confirmed by his fortitude the esteem of those who before admired him for his abilities[y]. The peculiar circumstances of his life were made more generally known by a short account[z], which was then published, and of which several thousands were, in a few weeks, dispersed over the nation; and the compassion of mankind operated so powerfully in his favour, that he was enabled, by frequent

[y] It appears that during his confinement he wrote a letter to his mother, which he sent to Theophilus Cibber, that it might be transmitted to her through the means of Mr. Wilks. In his letter to Cibber he says: "As to death, I am easy, and dare meet it like a man — all that touches me is the concern of my friends, and a reconcilement with my mother. I cannot express the agony I felt when I wrote the letter to her: if you can find any decent excuse for showing it to Mrs. Oldfield, do; for I would have all my friends (and that admirable lady in particular) be satisfied I have done my duty towards it. Dr. Young to-day sent me a letter most passionately kind." R.

[z] Written by Mr. Beckingham and another gentleman. Dr. J.

presents, not only to support himself, but to assist Mr. Gregory in prison; and, when he was pardoned and released, he found the number of his friends not lessened.

The nature of the act for which he had been tried was in itself doubtful; of the evidences which appeared against him, the character of the man was not unexceptionable, that of the woman notoriously infamous; she, whose testimony chiefly influenced the jury to condemn him, afterwards retracted her assertions. He always himself denied that he was drunk, as had been generally reported. Mr. Gregory, who is now, 1744, collector of Antigua, is said to declare him far less criminal than he was imagined, even by some who favoured him; and Page himself afterwards confessed, that he had treated him with uncommon rigour. When all these particulars are rated together, perhaps the memory of Savage may not be much sullied by his trial.

Some time after he had obtained his liberty, he met in the street the woman that had sworn with so much malignity against him. She informed him, that she was in distress, and, with a degree of confidence not easily attainable, desired him to relieve her. He, instead of insulting her misery, and taking pleasure in the calamities of one who had brought his life into danger, reproved her gently for her perjury; and changing the only guinea that he had, divided it equally between her and himself.

This is an action which, in some ages, would have made a saint, and, perhaps, in others a hero, and

which, without any hyperbolical encomiums, must be allowed to be an instance of uncommon generosity, an act of complicated virtue; by which he at once relieved the poor, corrected the vitious, and forgave an enemy; by which he at once remitted the strongest provocations, and exercised the most ardent charity.

Compassion was, indeed, the distinguishing quality of Savage; he never appeared inclined to take advantage of weakness, to attack the defenceless, or to press upon the falling: whoever was distressed, was certain at least of his good wishes; and when he could give no assistance to extricate them from misfortunes, he endeavoured to sooth them by sympathy and tenderness.

But when his heart was not softened by the sight of misery, he was sometimes obstinate in his resentment, and did not quickly lose the remembrance of an injury. He always continued to speak with anger of the insolence and partiality of Page, and a short time before his death revenged it by a satire[a].

It is natural to inquire in what terms Mr. Savage spoke of this fatal action, when the danger was over, and he was under no necessity of using any art to set his conduct in the fairest light. He was not willing to dwell upon it; and, if he transiently mentioned it, appeared neither to consider himself as a murderer, nor as a man wholly free from the guilt of blood[b]. How much and how long he regretted

[a] Printed in the late collection.

[b] In one of his letters he styles it "a fatal quarrel, but too well known." Dr. J.

it, appeared in a poem which he published many years afterwards. On occasion of a copy of verses, in which the failings of good men were recounted, and in which the author had endeavoured to illustrate his position, that "the best may sometimes deviate from virtue," by an instance of murder committed by Savage in the heat of wine, Savage remarked, that it was no very just representation of a good man, to suppose him liable to drunkenness, and disposed in his riots to cut throats.

He was now indeed at liberty, but was, as before, without any other support than accidental favours and uncertain patronage afforded him; sources by which he was sometimes very liberally supplied, and which at other times were suddenly stopped; so that he spent his life between want and plenty; or, what was yet worse, between beggary and extravagance; for as whatever he received was the gift of chance, which might as well favour him at one time as another, he was tempted to squander what he had, because he always hoped to be immediately supplied.

Another cause of his profusion was the absurd kindness of his friends, who at once rewarded and enjoyed his abilities, by treating him at taverns, and habituating him to pleasures which he could not afford to enjoy, and which he was not able to deny himself, though he purchased the luxury of a single night by the anguish of cold and hunger for a week.

The experience of these inconveniencies determined him to endeavour after some settled income, which, having long found submission and entreaties

fruitless, he attempted to extort from his mother by rougher methods. He had now, as he acknowledged, lost that tenderness for her, which the whole series of her cruelty had not been able wholly to repress, till he found, by the efforts which she made for his destruction, that she was not content with refusing to assist him, and being neutral in his struggles with poverty, but was as ready to snatch every opportunity of adding to his misfortunes; and that she was to be considered as an enemy implacably malicious, whom nothing but his blood could satisfy. He, therefore, threatened to harass her with lampoons, and to publish a copious narrative of her conduct, unless she consented to purchase an exemption from infamy, by allowing him a pension.

This expedient proved successful. Whether shame still survived, though virtue was extinct, or whether her relations had more delicacy than herself, and imagined that some of the darts which satire might point at her would glance upon them; lord Tyrconnel, whatever were his motives, upon his promise to lay aside his design of exposing the cruelty of his mother, received him into his family, treated him as his equal, and engaged to allow him a pension of two hundred pounds a year.

This was the golden part of Mr. Savage's life; and, for some time, he had no reason to complain of fortune; his appearance was splendid, his expenses large, and his acquaintance extensive. He was courted by all who endeavoured to be thought men of genius, and caressed by all who valued themselves

upon a refined taste. To admire Mr. Savage, was a proof of discernment; and to be acquainted with him, was a title to poetical reputation. His presence was sufficient to make any place of publick entertainment popular; and his approbation and example constituted the fashion. So powerful is genius, when it is invested with the glitter of affluence! Men willingly pay to fortune that regard which they owe to merit, and are pleased when they have an opportunity at once of gratifying their vanity, and practising their duty.

This interval of prosperity furnished him with opportunities of enlarging his knowledge of human nature, by contemplating life from its highest gradations to its lowest; and, had he afterwards applied to dramatick poetry, he would, perhaps, not have had many superiours; for, as he never suffered any scene to pass before his eyes without notice, he had treasured in his mind all the different combinations of passions, and the innumerable mixtures of vice and virtue, which distinguish one character from another; and, as his conception was strong, his expressions were clear; he easily received impressions from objects, and very forcibly transmitted them to others.

Of his exact observations on human life he has left a proof, which would do honour to the greatest names, in a small pamphlet, called the Author to be let[c], where he introduces Iscariot Hackney, a prostitute scribbler, giving an account of his birth, his education, his disposition and morals, habits of life,

[c] Printed in his works, vol. ii. p. 231.

and maxims of conduct. In the introduction are related many secret histories of the petty writers of that time, but sometimes mixed with ungenerous reflections on their birth, their circumstances, or those of their relations; nor can it be denied, that some passages are such as Iscariot Hackney might himself have produced.

He was accused, likewise, of living in an appearance of friendship with some whom he satirized, and of making use of the confidence which he gained by a seeming kindness, to discover failings and expose them: it must be confessed, that Mr. Savage's esteem was no very certain possession, and that he would lampoon at one time those whom he had praised at another.

It may be alleged, that the same man may change his principles; and that he, who was once deservedly commended, may be afterwards satirized with equal justice; or that the poet was dazzled with the appearance of virtue, and found the man whom he had celebrated, when he had an opportunity of examining him more narrowly, unworthy of the panegyrick which he had too hastily bestowed; and that as a false satire ought to be recanted, for the sake of him whose reputation may be injured, false praise ought likewise to be obviated, lest the distinction between vice and virtue should be lost, lest a bad man should be trusted upon the credit of his encomiast, or lest others should endeavour to obtain the like praises by the same means.

But though these excuses may be often plausible,

and sometimes just, they are very seldom satisfactory to mankind; and the writer, who is not constant to his subject, quickly sinks into contempt, his satire loses its force, and his panegyrick its value; and he is only considered at one time as a flatterer, and as a calumniator at another.

To avoid these imputations, it is only necessary to follow the rules of virtue, and to preserve an unvaried regard to truth. For though it is undoubtedly possible that a man, however cautious, may be sometimes deceived by an artful appearance of virtue, or by false evidences of guilt, such errours will not be frequent; and it will be allowed, that the name of an author would never have been made contemptible, had no man ever said what he did not think, or misled others but when he was himself deceived.

The Author to be let was first published in a single pamphlet, and afterwards inserted in a collection of pieces relating to the Dunciad, which were addressed by Mr. Savage to the earl of Middlesex, in a dedication[d] which he was prevailed upon to sign, though he did not write it, and in which there are some positions, that the true author would, perhaps, not have published under his own name, and on which Mr. Savage afterwards reflected with no great satisfaction; the enumeration of the bad effects of the uncontrouled freedom of the press, and the assertion that the "liberties taken by the writers of journals with their superiours were exorbitant and unjustifiable," very ill became men, who have them-

[d] See his works, vol. ii. p. 233.

selves not always shown the exactest regard to the laws of subordination in their writings, and who have often satirized those that at least thought themselves their superiours, as they were eminent for their hereditary rank, and employed in the highest offices of the kingdom. But this is only an instance of that partiality which almost every man indulges with regard to himself: the liberty of the press is a blessing when we are inclined to write against others, and a calamity when we find ourselves overborne by the multitude of our assailants; as the power of the crown is always thought too great by those who suffer by its influence, and too little by those in whose favour it is exerted; and a standing army is generally accounted necessary by those who command, and dangerous and oppressive by those who support it.

Mr. Savage was, likewise, very far from believing, that the letters annexed to each species of bad poets in the Bathos were, as he was directed to assert, "set down at random;" for when he was charged by one of his friends with putting his name to such an improbability, he had no other answer to make than that "he did not think of it;" and his friend had too much tenderness to reply, that next to the crime of writing contrary to what he thought, was that of writing without thinking.

After having remarked what is false in this dedication, it is proper that I observe the impartiality which I recommend, by declaring what Savage asserted; that the account of the circumstances which

attended the publication of the Dunciad, however strange and improbable, was exactly true.

The publication of this piece, at this time, raised Mr. Savage a great number of enemies among those that were attacked by Mr. Pope, with whom he was considered as a kind of confederate, and whom he was suspected of supplying with private intelligence and secret incidents: so that the ignominy of an informer was added to the terrour of a satirist.

That he was not altogether free from literary hypocrisy, and that he sometimes spoke one thing and wrote another, cannot be denied; because he himself confessed, that, when he lived in great familiarity with Dennis, he wrote an epigram[e] against him.

Mr. Savage, however, set all the malice of all the pygmy writers at defiance, and thought the friendship of Mr. Pope cheaply purchased by being exposed to their censure and their hatred; nor had he any reason to repent of the preference, for he found Mr. Pope a steady and unalienable friend almost to the end of his life.

About this time, notwithstanding his avowed neutrality with regard to party, he published a panegyrick on sir Robert Walpole, for which he was

[e] This epigram was, I believe, never published:

"Should Dennis publish you had stabb'd your brother,
Lampoon'd your monarch, or debauch'd your mother;
Say, what revenge on Dennis can be had,
Too dull for laughter, for reply too mad?
On one so poor you cannot take the law,
On one so old your sword you scorn to draw,
Uncag'd then, let the harmless monster rage,
Secure in dullness, madness, want, and age." DR. J.

rewarded by him with twenty guineas, a sum not very large, if either the excellence of the performance, or the affluence of the patron, be considered; but greater than he afterwards obtained from a person of yet higher rank, and more desirous in appearance of being distinguished as a patron of literature.

As he was very far from approving the conduct of sir Robert Walpole, and in conversation mentioned him sometimes with acrimony, and generally with contempt; as he was one of those who were always zealous in their assertions of the justice of the late opposition, jealous of the rights of the people, and alarmed by the long-continued triumph of the court; it was natural to ask him what could induce him to employ his poetry in praise of that man, who was, in his opinion, an enemy to liberty, and an oppressor of his country? He alleged, that he was then dependent upon the lord Tyrconnel, who was an implicit follower of the ministry, and that, being enjoined by him, not without menaces, to write in praise of his leader, he had not resolution sufficient to sacrifice the pleasure of affluence to that of integrity.

On this, and on many other occasions, he was ready to lament the misery of living at the tables of other men, which was his fate from the beginning to the end of his life; for I know not whether he ever had, for three months together, a settled habitation, in which he could claim a right of residence.

To this unhappy state it is just to impute much

of the inconstancy of his conduct; for though a readiness to comply with the inclination of others was no part of his natural character, yet he was sometimes obliged to relax his obstinacy, and submit his own judgment, and even his virtue, to the government of those by whom he was supported: so that, if his miseries were sometimes the consequences of his faults, he ought not yet to be wholly excluded from compassion, because his faults were very often the effects of his misfortunes.

In this gay period[f] of his life, while he was surrounded by affluence and pleasure, he published the Wanderer, a moral poem, of which the design is comprised in these lines:

> I fly all publick care, all venal strife,
> To try the still, compar'd with active life;
> To prove, by these, the sons of men may owe
> The fruits of bliss to bursting clouds of woe;
> That e'en calamity, by thought refin'd,
> Inspirits and adorns the thinking mind.

And more distinctly in the following passage:

> By woe, the soul to daring action swells;
> By woe, in plaintless patience it excels:
> From patience, prudent clear experience springs,
> And traces knowledge through the course of things!
> Thence hope is form'd, thence fortitude, success,
> Renown — whate'er men covet and caress.

This performance was always considered by himself as his masterpiece; and Mr. Pope, when he asked his opinion of it, told him, that he read it once over, and was not displeased with it; that it gave him more

[f] 1729.

pleasure at the second perusal, and delighted him still more at the third.

It has been generally objected to the Wanderer, that the disposition of the parts is irregular; that the design is obscure and the plan perplexed; that the images, however beautiful, succeed each other without order; and that the whole performance is not so much a regular fabrick, as a heap of shining materials thrown together by accident, which strikes rather with the solemn magnifience of a stupendous ruin, than the elegant grandeur of a finished pile.

This criticism is universal, and, therefore, it is reasonable to believe it, at least, in a great degree, just; but Mr. Savage was always of a contrary opinion, and thought his drift could only be missed by negligence or stupidity, and that the whole plan was regular, and the parts distinct.

It was never denied to abound with strong representations of nature, and just observations upon life; and it may easily be observed, that most of his pictures have an evident tendency to illustrate his first great position, "that good is the consequence of evil." The sun that burns up the mountains, fructifies the vales: the deluge that rushes down the broken rocks, with dreadful impetuosity, is separated into purling brooks; and the rage of the hurricane purifies the air.

Even in this poem he has not been able to forbear one touch upon the cruelty of his mother, which, though remarkably delicate and tender, is a proof how deep an impression it had upon his mind.

This must be at least acknowledged, which ought to be thought equivalent to many other excellencies, that this poem can promote no other purposes than those of virtue, and that it is written with a very strong sense of the efficacy of religion.

But my province is rather to give the history of Mr. Savage's performances than to display their beauties, or to obviate the criticisms which they had occasioned; and, therefore, I shall not dwell upon the particular passages which deserve applause; I shall neither show the excellence of his descriptions, nor expatiate on the terrifick portrait of suicide, nor point out the artful touches, by which he has distinguished the intellectual features of the rebels, who suffer death in his last canto. It is, however, proper to observe, that Mr. Savage always declared the characters wholly fictitious, and without the least allusion to any real persons or actions.

From a poem so diligently laboured, and so successfully finished, it might be reasonably expected that he should have gained considerable advantage; nor can it, without some degree of indignation and concern, be told, that he sold the copy for ten guineas, of which he afterwards returned two, that the two last sheets of the work might be reprinted, of which he had, in his absence, intrusted the correction to a friend, who was too indolent to perform it with accuracy.

A superstitious regard to the correction of his sheets was one of Mr. Savage's peculiarities: he

often altered, revised, recurred to his first reading or punctuation, and again adopted the alteration; he was dubious and irresolute without end, as on a question of the last importance, and at last was seldom satisfied: the intrusion or omission of a comma was sufficient to discompose him, and he would lament an errour of a single letter as a heavy calamity. In one of his letters relating to an impression of some verses, he remarks, that he had, with regard to the correction of the proof, "a spell upon him;" and indeed the anxiety, with which he dwelt upon the minutest and most trifling niceties, deserved no other name than that of fascination.

That he sold so valuable a performance for so small a price, was not to be imputed either to necessity, by which the learned and ingenious are often obliged to submit to very hard conditions; or to avarice, by which the booksellers are frequently incited to oppress that genius by which they are supported; but to that intemperate desire of pleasure, and habitual slavery to his passions, which involved him in many perplexities. He happened, at that time, to be engaged in the pursuit of some trifling gratification, and, being without money for the present occasion, sold his poem to the first bidder, and, perhaps, for the first price that was proposed; and would, probably, have been content with less, if less had been offered him.

This poem was addressed to the lord Tyrconnel, not only in the first lines, but in a formal dedication, filled with the highest strains of panegyrick, and

the warmest professions of gratitude, but by no means remarkable for delicacy of connexion or elegance of style.

These praises, in a short time, he found himself inclined to retract, being discarded by the man on whom he had bestowed them, and whom he then immediately discovered not to have deserved them. Of this quarrel, which every day made more bitter, lord Tyrconnel and Mr. Savage assigned very different reasons, which might, perhaps, all in reality concur, though they were not all convenient to be alleged by either party. Lord Tyrconnel affirmed, that it was the constant practice of Mr. Savage to enter a tavern with any company that proposed it, drink the most expensive wines with great profusion, and, when the reckoning was demanded, to be without money: if, as it often happened, his company were willing to defray his part, the affair ended without any ill consequences; but if they were refractory, and expected that the wine should be paid for by him that drank it, his method of composition was, to take them with him to his own apartment, assume the government of the house, and order the butler, in an imperious manner, to set the best wine in the cellar before his company, who often drank till they forgot the respect due to the house in which they were entertained, indulged themselves in the utmost extravagance of merriment, practised the most licentious frolicks, and committed all the outrages of drunkenness.

Nor was this the only charge which lord Tyrconnel

brought against him. Having given him a collection of valuable books, stamped with his own arms, he had the mortification to see them, in a short time, exposed to sale upon the stalls, it being usual with Mr. Savage, when he wanted a small sum, to take his books to the pawnbroker.

Whoever was acquainted with Mr. Savage easily credited both these accusations; for having been obliged, from his first entrance into the world, to subsist upon expedients, affluence was not able to exalt him above them; and so much was he delighted with wine and conversation, and so long had he been accustomed to live by chance, that he would, at any time, go to the tavern without scruple, and trust for the reckoning to the liberality of his company, and frequently of company to whom he was very little known. This conduct, indeed, very seldom drew upon him those inconveniencies that might be feared by any other person; for his conversation was so entertaining, and his address so pleasing, that few thought the pleasure which they received from him dearly purchased, by paying for his wine. It was his peculiar happiness, that he scarcely ever found a stranger, whom he did not leave a friend; but it must likewise be added, that he had not often a friend long, without obliging him to become a stranger.

Mr. Savage, on the other hand, declared, that lord Tyrconnel[g] quarrelled with him, because he would

[g] His expresssion, in one of his letters, was, "that lord Tyrconnel had involved his estate, and, therefore, poorly sought an occasion to quarrel with him." Dr. J.

not subtract from his own luxury and extravagance what he had promised to allow him, and that his resentment was only a plea for the violation of his promise. He asserted, that he had done nothing that ought to exclude him from that subsistence which he thought not so much a favour, as a debt, since it was offered him upon conditions which he had never broken; and that his only fault was, that he could not be supported with nothing.

He acknowledged, that lord Tyrconnel often exhorted him to regulate his method of life, and not to spend all his nights in taverns, and that he appeared very desirous that he would pass those hours with him, which he so freely bestowed upon others. This demand Mr. Savage considered as a censure of his conduct, which he could never patiently bear, and which, in the latter and cooler part of his life, was so offensive to him, that he declared it as his resolution, "to spurn that friend who should presume to dictate to him;" and it is not likely, that, in his earlier years, he received admonitions with more calmness.

He was, likewise, inclined to resent such expectations, as tending to infringe his liberty, of which he was very jealous, when it was necessary to the gratification of his passions; and declared, that the request was still more unreasonable, as the company to which he was to have been confined, was insupportably disagreeable. This assertion affords another instance of that inconsistency of his writings with his conversation, which was so often to be observed.

He forgot how lavishly he had, in his dedication to the Wanderer, extolled the delicacy and penetration, the humanity and generosity, the candour and politeness of the man, whom, when he no longer loved him, he declared to be a wretch without understanding, without good-nature, and without justice; of whose name he thought himself obliged to leave no trace in any future edition of his writings; and, accordingly, blotted it out of that copy of the Wanderer which was in his hands.

During his continuance with the lord Tyrconnel, he wrote the Triumph of Health and Mirth, on the recovery of lady Tyrconnel from a languishing illness. This performance is remarkable, not only for the gaiety of the ideas, and the melody of the numbers, but for the agreeable fiction upon which it is formed. Mirth, overwhelmed with sorrow for the sickness of her favourite, takes a flight in quest of her sister health, whom she finds reclined upon the brow of a lofty mountain, amidst the fragrance of perpetual spring, with the breezes of the morning sporting about her. Being solicited by her sister mirth, she readily promises her assistance, flies away in a cloud, and impregnates the waters of Bath with new virtues, by which the sickness of Belinda is relieved.

As the reputation of his abilities, the particular circumstances of his birth and life, the splendour of his appearance, and the distinction which was, for some time, paid him by lord Tyrconnel, entitled him to familiarity with persons of higher rank than those

to whose conversation he had been before admitted; he did not fail to gratify that curiosity, which induced him to take a nearer view of those whom their birth, their employments, or their fortunes, necessarily place at a distance from the greatest part of mankind, and to examine whether their merit was magnified or diminished by the medium through which it was contemplated; whether the splendour with which they dazzled their admirers was inherent in themselves, or only reflected on them by the objects that surrounded them; and whether great men were selected for high stations, or high stations made great men.

For this purpose he took all opportunities of conversing familiarly with those who were most conspicuous at that time for their power or their influence; he watched their looser moments, and examined their domestick behaviour, with that acuteness which nature had given him, and which the uncommon variety of his life had contributed to increase, and that inquisitiveness which must always be produced in a vigorous mind, by an absolute freedom from all pressing or domestick engagements.

His discernment was quick, and, therefore, he soon found in every person, and in every affair, something that deserved attention; he was supported by others, without any care for himself, and was, therefore, at leisure to pursue his observations.

More circumstances to constitute a critick on human life could not easily concur; nor indeed could any man, who assumed from accidental advantages

more praise than he could justly claim from his real merit, admit an acquaintance more dangerous than that of Savage; of whom, likewise, it must be confessed, that abilities really exalted above the common level, or virtue refined from passion, or proof against corruption, could not easily find an abler judge, or a warmer advocate.

What was the result of Mr. Savage's inquiry, though he was not much accustomed to conceal his discoveries, it may not be entirely safe to relate, because the persons whose characters he criticised are powerful; and power and resentment are seldom strangers; nor would it, perhaps, be wholly just, because what he asserted in conversation might, though true in general, be heightened by some momentary ardour of imagination, and, as it can be delivered only from memory, may be imperfectly represented; so that the picture at first aggravated, and then unskilfully copied, may be justly suspected to retain no great resemblance of the original.

It may, however, be observed, that he did not appear to have formed very elevated ideas of those to whom the administration of affairs, or the conduct of parties, has been entrusted; who have been considered as the advocates of the crown, or the guardians of the people; and who have obtained the most implicit confidence, and the loudest applauses. Of one particular person, who has been at one time so popular as to be generally esteemed, and, at another, so formidable as to be universally detested, he ob-

served, that his acquisitions had been small, or that his capacity was narrow, and that the whole range of his mind was from obscenity to politicks, and from politicks to obscenity.

But the opportunity of indulging his speculations on great characters was now at an end. He was banished from the table of lord Tyrconnel, and turned again adrift upon the world, without prospect of finding quickly any other harbour. As prudence was not one of the virtues by which he was distinguished, he had made no provision against a misfortune like this. And though it is not to be imagined but that the separation must, for some time, have been preceded by coldness, peevishness, or neglect, though it was undoubtedly the consequence of accumulated provocations on both sides; yet every one that knew Savage will readily believe, that to him it was sudden as a stroke of thunder; that, though he might have transiently suspected it, he had never suffered any thought so unpleasing to sink into his mind, but that he had driven it away by amusements, or dreams of future felicity and affluence, and had never taken any measures by which he might prevent a precipitation from plenty to indigence.

This quarrel and separation, and the difficulties to which Mr. Savage was exposed by them, were soon known both to his friends and enemies; nor was it long before he perceived, from the behaviour of both, how much is added to the lustre of genius by the ornaments of wealth.

His condition did not appear to excite much compassion; for he had not always been careful to use the advantages he enjoyed with that moderation which ought to have been with more than usual caution preserved by him, who knew, if he had reflected, that he was only a dependant on the bounty of another, whom he could expect to support him no longer than he endeavoured to preserve his favour by complying with his inclinations, and whom he, nevertheless, set at defiance, and was continually irritating by negligence or encroachments.

Examples need not be sought at any great distance to prove, that superiority of fortune has a natural tendency to kindle pride, and that pride seldom fails to exert itself in contempt and insult; and if this is often the effect of hereditary wealth, and of honours enjoyed only by the merit of others, it is some extenuation of any indecent triumphs to which this unhappy man may have been betrayed, that his prosperity was heightened by the force of novelty, and made more intoxicating by a sense of the misery in which he had so long languished, and, perhaps, of the insults which he had formerly borne, and which he might now think himself entitled to revenge. It is too common for those who have unjustly suffered pain, to inflict it, likewise, in their turn, with the same injustice, and to imagine that they have a right to treat others as they have themselves been treated.

That Mr. Savage was too much elevated by any good fortune, is generally known; and some pas-

sages of his introduction to the Author to be let, sufficiently show, that he did not wholly refrain from such satire, as he afterwards thought very unjust when he was exposed to it himself; for, when he was afterwards ridiculed in the character of a distressed poet, he very easily discovered that distress was not a proper subject for merriment, or topick of invective. He was then able to discern, that if misery be the effect of virtue, it ought to be reverenced; if of ill fortune, to be pitied; and if of vice, not to be insulted, because it is, perhaps, itself a punishment adequate to the crime by which it was produced. And the humanity of that man can deserve no panegyrick, who is capable of reproaching a criminal in the hands of the executioner.

But these reflections, though they readily occurred to him in the first and last parts of his life, were, I am afraid, for a long time forgotten; at least they were, like many other maxims, treasured up in his mind rather for show than use, and operated very little upon his conduct, however elegantly he might sometimes explain, or however forcibly he might inculcate them.

His degradation, therefore, from the condition which he had enjoyed with such wanton thoughtlessness, was considered by many as an occasion of triumph. Those who had before paid their court to him without success, soon returned the contempt which they had suffered; and they who had received favours from him, for of such favours as he could bestow he was very liberal, did not always remem-

ber them. So much more certain are the effects of resentment than of gratitude: it is not only to many more pleasing to recollect those faults which place others below them, than those virtues by which they are themselves comparatively depressed; but it is, likewise, more easy to neglect, than to recompense; and though there are few who will practise a laborious virtue, there will never be wanting multitudes that will indulge an easy vice.

Savage, however, was very little disturbed at the marks of contempt which his ill fortune brought upon him, from those whom he never esteemed, and with whom he never considered himself as levelled by any calamities; and though it was not without some uneasiness that he saw some, whose friendship he valued, change their behaviour; he yet observed their coldness without much emotion, considered them as the slaves of fortune and the worshippers of prosperity, and was more inclined to despise them, than to lament himself.

It does not appear that, after this return of his wants, he found mankind equally favourable to him, as at his first appearance in the world. His story, though in reality not less melancholy, was less affecting, because it was no longer new; it, therefore, procured him no new friends; and those that had formerly relieved him, thought they might now consign him to others. He was now, likewise, considered by many rather as criminal, than as unhappy; for the friends of lord Tyrconnel, and of his mother, were sufficiently industrious to publish his weak-

nesses, which were indeed very numerous; and nothing was forgotten that might make him either hateful or ridiculous.

It cannot but be imagined, that such representations of his faults must make great numbers less sensible of his distress; many, who had only an opportunity to hear one part, made no scruple to propagate the account which they received; many assisted their circulation from malice or revenge; and, perhaps, many pretended to credit them, that they might, with a better grace, withdraw their regard, or withhold their assistance.

Savage, however, was not one of those who suffered himself to be injured without resistance, nor was less diligent in exposing the faults of lord Tyrconnel; over whom he obtained at least this advantage, that he drove him first to the practice of outrage and violence; for he was so much provoked by the wit and virulence of Savage, that he came, with a number of attendants, that did no honour to his courage, to beat him at a coffee-house. But it happened that he had left the place a few minutes; and his lordship had, without danger, the pleasure of boasting how he would have treated him. Mr. Savage went next day to repay his visit at his own house; but was prevailed on, by his domesticks, to retire without insisting upon seeing him.

Lord Tyrconnel was accused by Mr. Savage of some actions, which scarcely any provocations will be thought sufficient to justify; such as seizing what he had in his lodgings, and other instances of wan-

ton cruelty, by which he increased the distress of Savage, without any advantage to himself.

These mutual accusations were retorted on both sides, for many years, with the utmost degree of virulence and rage; and time seemed rather to augment than diminish their resentment. That the anger of Mr. Savage should be kept alive, is not strange, because he felt every day the consequences of the quarrel; but it might reasonably have been hoped, that lord Tyrconnel might have relented, and at length have forgot those provocations, which, however they might have once inflamed him, had not, in reality, much hurt him.

The spirit of Mr. Savage, indeed, never suffered him to solicit a reconciliation; he returned reproach for reproach, and insult for insult; his superiority of wit supplied the disadvantages of his fortune, and enabled him to form a party, and prejudice great numbers in his favour.

But, though this might be some gratification of his vanity, it afforded very little relief to his necessities; and he was very frequently reduced to uncommon hardships, of which, however, he never made any mean or importunate complaints, being formed rather to bear misery with fortitude, than enjoy prosperity with moderation.

He now thought himself again at liberty to expose the cruelty of his mother; and, therefore, I believe, about this time, published the Bastard, a poem remarkable for the vivacious sallies of thought in the beginning, where he makes a pompous enu-

meration of the imaginary advantages of base birth; and the pathetick sentiments at the end, where he recounts the real calamities which he suffered by the crime of his parents.

The vigour and spirit of the verses, the peculiar circumstances of the author, the novelty of the subject, and the notoriety of the story to which the allusions are made, procured this performance a very favourable reception; great numbers were immediately dispersed, and editions were multiplied with unusual rapidity.

One circumstance attended the publication, which Savage used to relate with great satisfaction: his mother, to whom the poem was with "due reverence" inscribed, happened then to be at Bath, where she could not conveniently retire from censure, or conceal herself from observation; and no sooner did the reputation of the poem begin to spread, than she heard it repeated in all places of concourse; nor could she enter the assembly-rooms, or cross the walks, without being saluted with some lines from the Bastard.

This was, perhaps, the first time that she ever discovered a sense of shame, and on this occasion the power of wit was very conspicuous; the wretch who had, without scruple, proclaimed herself an adulteress, and who had first endeavoured to starve her son, then to transport him, and afterwards to hang him, was not able to bear the representation of her own conduct; but fled from reproach, though she felt no pain from guilt, and left Bath with the ut-

most haste, to shelter herself among the crowds of London.

Thus Savage had the satisfaction of finding, that, though he could not reform his mother, he could punish her, and that he did not always suffer alone.

The pleasure which he received from this increase of his poetical reputation, was sufficient, for some time, to overbalance the miseries of want, which this performance did not much alleviate; for it was sold for a very trivial sum to a bookseller, who, though the success was so uncommon that five impressions were sold, of which many were, undoubtedly, very numerous, had not generosity sufficient to admit the unhappy writer to any part of the profit.

The sale of this poem was always mentioned by Savage with the utmost elevation of heart, and referred to by him as an incontestable proof of a general acknowledgment of his abilities. It was, indeed, the only production of which he could justly boast a general reception.

But though he did not lose the opportunity which success gave him, of setting a high rate on his abilities, but paid due deference to the suffrages of mankind when they were given in his favour, he did not suffer his esteem of himself to depend upon others, nor found any thing sacred in the voice of the people, when they were inclined to censure him; he then readily showed the folly of expecting that the publick should judge right, observed how slowly poetical merit had often forced its way into the world; he contented himself with the applause of

men of judgment, and was somewhat disposed to exclude all those from the character of men of judgment who did not applaud him.

But he was at other times more favourable to mankind than to think them blind to the beauties of his works, and imputed the slowness of their sale to other causes; either they were published at a time when the town was empty, or when the attention of the publick was engrossed by some struggle in the parliament, or some other object of general concern; or they were, by the neglect of the publisher, not diligently dispersed, or by his avarice not advertised with sufficient frequency. Address, or industry, or liberality, was always wanting; and the blame was laid rather on any person than the author.

By arts like these, arts which every man practises in some degree, and to which too much of the little tranquillity of life is to be ascribed, Savage was always able to live at peace with himself. Had he indeed only made use of these expedients to alleviate the loss or want of fortune or reputation, or any other advantages which it is not in man's power to bestow upon himself, they might have been justly mentioned as instances of a philosophical mind, and very properly proposed to the imitation of multitudes, who, for want of diverting their imaginations with the same dexterity, languish under afflictions which might be easily removed.

It were, doubtless, to be wished, that truth and reason were universally prevalent; that every thing were esteemed according to its real value; and that

men would secure themselves from being disappointed in their endeavours after happiness, by placing it only in virtue, which is always to be obtained; but, if adventitious and foreign pleasures must be pursued, it would be, perhaps, of some benefit, since that pursuit must frequently be fruitless, if the practice of Savage could be taught, that folly might be an antidote to folly, and one fallacy be obviated by another.

But the danger of this pleasing intoxication must not be concealed; nor indeed can any one, after having observed the life of Savage, need to be cautioned against it. By imputing none of his miseries to himself, he continued to act upon the same principles, and to follow the same path; was never made wiser by his sufferings, nor preserved by one misfortune from falling into another. He proceeded, throughout his life, to tread the same steps on the same circle; always applauding his past conduct, or, at least, forgetting it to amuse himself with phantoms of happiness, which were dancing before him; and willingly turned his eyes from the light of reason, when it would have discovered the illusion and shown him, what he never wished to see, his real state.

He is even accused, after having lulled his imagination with those ideal opiates, of having tried the same experiment upon his conscience; and, having accustomed himself to impute all deviations from the right to foreign causes, it is certain that he was, upon every occasion, too easily reconciled to himself, and that he appeared very little to regret those

practices which had impaired his reputation. The reigning errour of his life was, that he mistook the love for the practice of virtue, and was, indeed, not so much a good man as the friend of goodness.

This, at least, must be allowed him, that he always preserved a strong sense of the dignity, the beauty, and the necessity of virtue; and that he never contributed deliberately to spread corruption amongst mankind. His actions, which were generally precipitate, were often blameable; but his writings, being the productions of study, uniformly tended to the exaltation of the mind, and the propagation of morality and piety.

These writings may improve mankind, when his failings shall be forgotten; and, therefore, he must be considered, upon the whole, as a benefactor to the world; nor can his personal example do any hurt, since whoever hears of his faults will hear of the miseries which they brought upon him, and which would deserve less pity, had not his condition been such as made his faults pardonable. He may be considered as a child exposed to all the temptations of indigence, at an age when resolution was not yet strengthened by conviction, nor virtue confirmed by habit; a circumstance which, in his Bastard, he laments in a very affecting manner:

> No mother's care
> Shielded my infant innocence with pray'r:
> No father's guardian hand my youth maintain'd,
> Call'd forth my virtues, or from vice restrain'd.

The Bastard, however it might provoke or mortify

his mother, could not be expected to melt her to compassion, so that he was still under the same want of the necessaries of life; and he, therefore, exerted all the interest which his wit, or his birth, or his misfortunes, could procure, to obtain, upon the death of Eusden, the place of poet laureate, and prosecuted his application with so much diligence, that the king publickly declared it his intention to bestow it upon him; but such was the fate of Savage, that even the king, when he intended his advantage, was disappointed in his schemes; for the lord chamberlain, who has the disposal of the laurel, as one of the appendages of his office, either did not know the king's design, or did not approve it, or thought the nomination of the laureate an encroachment upon his rights, and, therefore, bestowed the laurel upon Colley Cibber.

Mr. Savage, thus disappointed, took a resolution of applying to the queen, that, having once given him life, she would enable him to support it, and, therefore, published a short poem on her birthday, to which he gave the odd title of Volunteer Laureate. The event of this essay he has himself related in the following letter, which he prefixed to the poem, when he afterwards reprinted it in the Gentleman's Magazine, from whence I have copied it entire, as this was one of the few attempts in which Mr. Savage succeeded.

"Mr. URBAN,— In your magazine for February you published the last Volunteer Laureate, written

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WAYNE, NEBRASKA

on a very melancholy occasion, the death of the royal patroness of arts and literature in general, and of the author of that poem in particular; I now send you the first that Mr. Savage wrote under that title. This gentleman, notwithstanding a very considerable interest, being, on the death of Mr. Eusden, disappointed of the laureate's place, wrote the before-mentioned poem; which was no sooner published, but the late queen sent to a bookseller for it. The author had not at that time a friend either to get him introduced, or his poem presented at court; yet such was the unspeakable goodness of that princess, that, notwithstanding this act of ceremony was wanting, in a few days after publication, Mr. Savage received a bank bill of fifty pounds, and a gracious message from her majesty, by the lord North and Guildford, to this effect: 'That her majesty was highly pleased with the verses; that she took particularly kind his lines there relating to the king; that he had permission to write annually on the same subject; and that he should yearly receive the like present, till something better (which was her majesty's intention) could be done for him.' After this, he was permitted to present one of his annual poems to her majesty, had the honour of kissing her hand, and met with the most gracious reception.

"Yours, &c."

Such was the performance[h], and such its reception; a reception, which, though by no means un-

[h] This poem is inserted in the late collection.

kind, was yet not in the highest degree generous: to chain down the genius of a writer to an annual panegyrick, showed in the queen too much desire of hearing her own praises, and a greater regard to herself than to him on whom her bounty was conferred. It was a kind of avaricious generosity, by which flattery was rather purchased than genius rewarded.

Mrs. Oldfield had formerly given him the same allowance with much more heroick intention: she had no other view than to enable him to prosecute his studies, and to set himself above the want of assistance, and was contented with doing good without stipulating for encomiums.

Mr. Savage, however, was not at liberty to make exceptions, but was ravished with the favours which he had received, and probably yet more with those which he was promised: he considered himself now as a favourite of the queen, and did not doubt but a few annual poems would establish him in some profitable employment.

He, therefore, assumed the title of volunteer laureate, not without some reprehensions from Cibber, who informed him, that the title of laureate was a mark of honour conferred by the king, from whom all honour is derived, and which, therefore, no man has a right to bestow upon himself; and added, that he might with equal propriety style himself a volunteer lord or volunteer baronet. It cannot be denied that the remark was just; but Savage did not think any title, which was conferred upon

Mr. Cibber, so honourable as that the usurpation of it could be imputed to him as an instance of very exorbitant vanity, and, therefore, continued to write under the same title, and received every year the same reward.

He did not appear to consider these encomiums as tests of his abilities, or as any thing more than annual hints to the queen of her promise, or acts of ceremony, by the performance of which he was entitled to his pension, and, therefore, did not labour them with great diligence, or print more than fifty each year, except that for some of the last years he regularly inserted them in the Gentleman's Magazine, by which they were dispersed over the kingdom.

Of some of them he had himself so low an opinion, that he intended to omit them in the collection of poems, for which he printed proposals, and solicited subscriptions; nor can it seem strange, that, being confined to the same subject, he should be at some times indolent, and at others unsuccessful; that he should sometimes delay a disagreeable task till it was too late to perform it well; or that he should sometimes repeat the same sentiment on the same occasion, or at others be misled by an attempt after novelty to forced conceptions and far-fetched images.

He wrote, indeed, with a double intention, which supplied him with some variety; for his business was, to praise the queen for the favours which he had received, and to complain to her of the delay of those

which she had promised: in some of his pieces, therefore, gratitude is predominant, and in some discontent; in some, he represents himself as happy in her patronage; and, in others, as disconsolate to find himself neglected.

Her promise, like other promises made to this unfortunate man, was never performed, though he took sufficient care that it should not be forgotten. The publication of his Volunteer Laureate procured him no other reward than a regular remittance of fifty pounds.

He was not so depressed by his disappointments as to neglect any opportunity that was offered of advancing his interest. When the princess Anne was married, he wrote a poem upon her departure, only, as he declared, "because it was expected from him," and he was not willing to bar his own prospects by any appearance of neglect[1].

He never mentioned any advantage gained by this poem, or any regard that was paid to it; and, therefore, it is likely that it was considered at court as an act of duty, to which he was obliged by his dependence, and which it was, therefore, not necessary to reward by any new favour: or, perhaps, the queen really intended his advancement, and, therefore, thought it superfluous to lavish presents upon a man whom she intended to establish for life.

About this time not only his hopes were in danger of being frustrated, but his pension likewise of being obstructed, by an accidental calumny. The writer

[1] Printed in the late collection.

of the Daily Courant, a paper then published under the direction of the ministry, charged him with a crime, which, though not very great in itself, would have been remarkably invidious in him, and might very justly have incensed the queen against him. He was accused by name of influencing elections against the court, by appearing at the head of a tory mob; nor did the accuser fail to aggravate his crime, by representing it as the effect of the most atrocious ingratitude, and a kind of rebellion against the queen, who had first preserved him from an infamous death, and afterwards distinguished him by her favour, and supported him by her charity. The charge, as it was open and confident, was likewise, by good fortune, very particular. The place of the transaction was mentioned, and the whole series of the rioter's conduct related. This exactness made Mr. Savage's vindication easy; for he never had in his life seen the place which was declared to be the scene of his wickedness, nor ever had been present in any town when its representatives were chosen. This answer he, therefore, made haste to publish, with all the circumstances necessary to make it credible; and very reasonably demanded, that the accusation should be retracted in the same paper, that he might no longer suffer the imputation of sedition and ingratitude. This demand was likewise pressed by him in a private letter to the author of the paper, who, either trusting to the protection of those whose defence he had undertaken, or having entertained some personal malice against Mr.

Savage, or fearing lest, by retracting so confident an assertion, he should impair the credit of his paper, refused to give him that satisfaction.

Mr. Savage, therefore, thought it necessary, to his own vindication, to prosecute him in the King's Bench; but as he did not find any ill effects from the accusation, having sufficiently cleared his innocence, he thought any further procedure would have the appearance of revenge; and, therefore, willingly dropped it.

He saw, soon afterwards, a process commenced in the same court against himself, on an information in which he was accused of writing and publishing an obscene pamphlet.

It was always Mr. Savage's desire to be distinguished; and, when any controversy became popular, he never wanted some reason for engaging in it with great ardour, and appearing at the head of the party which he had chosen. As he was never celebrated for his prudence, he had no sooner taken his side, and informed himself of the chief topicks of the dispute, than he took all opportunities of asserting and propagating his principles, without much regard to his own interest, or any other visible design than that of drawing upon himself the attention of mankind.

The dispute between the bishop of London and the chancellor is well known to have been, for some time, the chief topick of political conversation; and, therefore, Mr. Savage, in pursuance of his character, endeavoured to become conspicuous among the con-

trovertists with which every coffee-house was filled on that occasion. He was an indefatigable opposer of all the claims of ecclesiastical power, though he did not know on what they were founded; and was, therefore, no friend to the bishop of London. But he had another reason for appearing as a warm advocate for Dr. Rundle; for he was the friend of Mr. Foster and Mr. Thomson, who were the friends of Mr. Savage.

Thus remote was his interest in the question, which, however, as he imagined, concerned him so nearly, that it was not sufficient to harangue and dispute, but necessary likewise to write upon it.

He, therefore, engaged with great ardour in a new poem, called by him, the Progress of a Divine; in which he conducts a profligate priest, by all the gradations of wickedness, from a poor curacy in the country to the highest preferments of the church; and describes, with that humour which was natural to him, and that knowledge which was extended to all the diversities of human life, his behaviour in every station; and insinuates, that this priest, thus accomplished, found at last a patron in the bishop of London.

When he was asked by one of his friends, on what pretence he could charge the bishop with such an action, he had no more to say than that he had only inverted the accusation; and that he thought it reasonable to believe, that he who obstructed the rise of a good man without reason, would, for bad reasons, promote the exaltation of a villain.

The clergy were universally provoked by this satire; and Savage, who, as was his constant practice, had set his name to his performance, was censured in the Weekly Miscellany[j] with severity, which he did not seem inclined to forget.

[j] A short satire was, likewise, published in the same paper, in which were the following lines:

For cruel murder doom'd to hempen death,
Savage, by royal grace, prolong'd his breath.
Well might you think he spent his future years
In pray'r, and fasting, and repentant tears.
—But, O vain hope!—the truly Savage cries,
"Priests, and their slavish doctrines, I despise.
Shall I————
Who, by free-thinking to free action fir'd,
In midnight brawls a deathless name acquir'd,
Now stoop to learn of ecclesiastic men?—
No, arm'd with rhyme, at priests I'll take my aim,
Though prudence bids me murder but their fame."
Weekly Miscellany.

An answer was published in the Gentleman's Magazine, written by an unknown hand, from which the following lines are selected:

Transform'd by thoughtless rage, and midnight wine,
From malice free, and push'd without design;
In equal brawl if Savage lung'd a thrust,
And brought the youth a victim to the dust;
So strong the hand of accident appears,
The royal hand from guilt and vengeance clears.
Instead of wasting "all thy future years,
Savage, in pray'r and vain repentant tears,"
Exert thy pen to mend a vitious age,
To curb the priest, and sink his high-church rage;
To show what frauds the holy vestments hide,
The nests of av'rice, lust, and pedant pride:
Then change the scene, let merit brightly shine,
And round the patriot twist the wreath divine;
The heav'nly guide deliver down to fame;
In well tun'd lays transmit a Foster's name;
Touch ev'ry passion with harmonious art,
Exalt the genius, and correct the heart.

But a return of invective was not thought a sufficient punishment. The court of King's Bench was, therefore, moved against him; and he was obliged to return an answer to a charge of obscenity. It was urged in his defence, that obscenity was criminal when it was intended to promote the practice of vice; but that Mr. Savage had only introduced obscene ideas, with the view of exposing them to detestation, and of amending the age, by showing the deformity of wickedness. This plea was admitted; and sir Philip Yorke, who then presided in that court, dismissed the information with encomiums upon the purity and excellence of Mr. Savage's writings. The prosecution, however, answered in some measure the purpose of those by whom it was set on foot; for Mr. Savage was so far intimidated by it, that, when the edition of his poem was sold, he did not venture to reprint it; so that it was in a short time forgotten, or forgotten by all but those whom it offended.

It is said that some endeavours were used to incense the queen against him: but he found advocates to obviate, at least, part of their effect; for, though he was never advanced, he still continued to receive his pension.

Thus future times shall royal grace extol;
Thus polish'd lines thy present fame enrol.
——But grant——
——Maliciously that Savage plung'd the steel,
And made the youth its shining vengeance feel;
My soul abhors the act, the man detests,
But more the bigotry in priestly breasts."

Gentleman's Magazine, May, 1735. Dr. J.

This poem drew more infamy upon him than any incident of his life; and, as his conduct can not be vindicated, it is proper to secure his memory from reproach, by informing those whom he made his enemies, that he never intended to repeat the provocation; and that, though, whenever he thought he had any reason to complain of the clergy, he used to threaten them with a new edition of the Progress of a Divine, it was his calm and settled resolution to suppress it for ever.

He once intended to have made a better reparation for the folly or injustice with which he might be charged, by writing another poem, called the Progress of a Freethinker, whom he intended to lead through all the stages of vice and folly, to convert him from virtue to wickedness, and from religion to infidelity, by all the modish sophistry used for that purpose; and, at last, to dismiss him by his own hand into the other world.

That he did not execute this design is a real loss to mankind; for he was too well acquainted with all the scenes of debauchery to have failed in his representations of them, and too zealous for virtue not to have represented them in such a manner as should expose them either to ridicule or detestation.

But this plan was, like others, formed and laid aside, till the vigour of his imagination was spent, and the effervescence of invention had subsided; but soon gave way to some other design, which pleased by its novelty for awhile, and then was neglected like the former.

He was still in his usual exigencies, having no certain support but the pension allowed him by the queen, which, though it might have kept an exact economist from want, was very far from being sufficient for Mr. Savage, who had never been accustomed to dismiss any of his appetites without the gratification which they solicited, and whom nothing but want of money withheld from partaking of every pleasure that fell within his view.

His conduct, with regard to his pension, was very particular. No sooner had he changed the bill, than he vanished from the sight of all his acquaintances, and lay, for some time, out of the reach of all the inquiries that friendship or curiosity could make after him. At length he appeared again penniless as before, but never informed even those whom he seemed to regard most, where he had been; nor was his retreat ever discovered.

This was his constant practice during the whole time that he received the pension from the queen: he regularly disappeared and returned. He, indeed, affirmed that he retired to study, and that the money supported him in solitude for many months; but his friends declared, that the short time in which it was spent sufficiently confuted his own account of his conduct.

His politeness and his wit still raised him friends, who were desirous of setting him at length free from that indigence by which he had been hitherto oppressed; and, therefore, solicited sir Robert Walpole in his favour with so much earnestness, that they

obtained a promise of the next place that should become vacant, not exceeding two hundred pounds a year. This promise was made with an uncommon declaration, "that it was not the promise of a minister to a petitioner, but of a friend to his friend."

Mr. Savage now concluded himself set at ease for ever, and, as he observes in a poem written on that incident of his life, trusted and was trusted; but soon found that his confidence was ill-grounded, and this friendly promise was not inviolable. He spent a long time in solicitations, and, at last despaired and desisted.

He did not indeed deny, that he had given the minister some reason to believe that he should not strengthen his own interest by advancing him, for he had taken care to distinguish himself in coffee-houses as an advocate for the ministry of the last years of queen Anne, and was always ready to justify the conduct, and exalt the character of lord Bolingbroke, whom he mentions with great regard in an Epistle upon Authors, which he wrote about that time, but was too wise to publish, and of which only some fragments have appeared, inserted by him in the magazine after his retirement.

To despair was not, however, the character of Savage; when one patronage failed, he had recourse to another. The prince was now extremely popular, and had very liberally rewarded the merit of some writers, whom Mr. Savage did not think superiour to himself, and, therefore, he resolved to address a poem to him.

For this purpose he made choice of a subject which could regard only persons of the highest rank and greatest affluence, and which was, therefore, proper for a poem intended to procure the patronage of a prince; and, having retired, for some time, to Richmond, that he might prosecute his design in full tranquillity, without the temptations of pleasure, or the solicitations of creditors, by which his meditations were in equal danger of being disconcerted, he produced a poem on Publick Spirit, with regard to Publick Works.

The plan of this poem is very extensive, and comprises a multitude of topicks, each of which might furnish matter sufficent for a long performance, and of which some have already employed more eminent writers; but as he was, perhaps, not fully acquainted with the whole extent of his own design, and was writing to obtain a supply of wants too pressing to admit of long or accurate inquiries, he passes negligently over many publick works, which, even in his own opinion, deserved to be more elaborately treated.

But, though he may sometimes disappoint his reader by transient touches upon these subjects, which have often been considered, and, therefore, naturally raise expectations, he must be allowed amply to compensate his omissions, by expatiating, in the conclusion of his work, upon a kind of beneficence not yet celebrated by any eminent poet, though it now appears more susceptible of embellishments, more adapted to exalt the ideas, and

affect the passions, than many of those which have hitherto been thought most worthy of the ornaments of verse. The settlement of colonies in uninhabited countries, the establishment of those in security, whose misfortunes have made their own country no longer pleasing or safe, the acquisition of property without injury to any, the appropriation of the waste and luxuriant bounties of nature, and the enjoyment of those gifts which heaven has scattered upon regions uncultivated and unoccupied, cannot be considered without giving rise to a great number of pleasing ideas, and bewildering the imagination in delightful prospects; and, therefore, whatever speculations they may produce in those who have confined themselves to political studies, naturally fixed the attention, and excited the applause, of a poet. The politician, when he considers men driven into other countries for shelter, and obliged to retire to forests and deserts, and pass their lives, and fix their posterity, in the remotest corners of the world, to avoid those hardships which they suffer or fear in their native place, may very properly inquire, why the legislature does not provide a remedy for these miseries, rather than encourage an escape from them. He may conclude that the flight of every honest man is a loss to the community; that those who are unhappy without guilt ought to be relieved; and the life, which is overburdened by accidental calamities, set at ease by the care of the publick; and that those, who have by misconduct forfeited their claim to favour, ought

rather to be made useful to the society which they have injured, than driven from it. But the poet is employed in a more pleasing undertaking than that of proposing laws which, however just or expedient, will never be made; or endeavouring to reduce to rational schemes of government societies which were formed by chance, and are conducted by the private passions of those who preside in them. He guides the unhappy fugitive, from want and persecution, to plenty, quiet, and security, and seats him in scenes of peaceful solitude, and undisturbed repose.

Savage has not forgotten, amidst the pleasing sentiments which this prospect of retirement suggested to him, to censure those crimes which have been generally committed by the discoverers of new regions, and to expose the enormous wickedness of making war upon barbarous nations because they cannot resist, and of invading countries because they are fruitful; of extending navigation only to propagate vice, and of visiting distant lands only to lay them waste. He has asserted the natural equality of mankind, and endeavoured to suppress that pride which inclines men to imagine that right is the consequence of power.

His description of the various miseries which force men to seek for refuge in distant countries, affords another instance of his proficiency in the important and extensive study of human life; and the tenderness with which he recounts them, another proof of his humanity and benevolence.

It is observable, that the close of this poem dis-

covers a change which experience had made in Mr. Savage's opinions. In a poem written by him in his youth, and published in his Miscellanies, he declares his contempt of the contracted views and narrow prospects of the middle state of life, and declares his resolution either to tower like the cedar, or be trampled like the shrub; but in this poem, though addressed to a prince, he mentions this state of life as comprising those who ought most to attract reward, those who merit most the confidence of power, and the familiarity of greatness; and, accidentally mentioning this passage to one of his friends, declared, that, in his opinion, all the virtue of mankind was comprehended in that state.

In describing villas and gardens, he did not omit to condemn that absurd custom which prevails among the English, of permitting servants to receive money from strangers for the entertainment that they receive, and, therefore, inserted in his poem these lines:

> But what the flow'ring pride of gardens rare,
> However royal, or however fair,
> If gates, which to access should still give way,
> Ope but, like Peter's paradise, for pay?
> If perquisited varlets frequent stand,
> And each new walk must a new tax demand?
> What foreign eye but with contempt surveys?
> What muse shall from oblivion snatch their praise?

But before the publication of his performance he recollected, that the queen allowed her garden and cave at Richmond to be shown for money; and that she so openly countenanced the practice, that she

had bestowed the privilege of showing them as a place of profit on a man, whose merit she valued herself upon rewarding, though she gave him only the liberty of disgracing his country.

He, therefore, thought, with more prudence than was often exerted by him, that the publication of these lines might be officiously represented as an insult upon the queen, to whom he owed his life and his subsistence: and that the propriety of his observation would be no security against the censures which the unseasonableness of it might draw upon him; he, therefore, suppressed the passage in the first edition, but after the queen's death thought the same caution no longer necessary, and restored it to the proper place.

The poem was, therefore, published without any political faults, and inscribed to the prince: but Mr. Savage, having no friend upon whom he could prevail to present it to him, had no other method of attracting his observation than the publication of frequent advertisements, and, therefore, received no reward from his patron, however generous on other occasions.

This disappointment he never mentioned without indignation, being, by some means or other, confident that the prince was not ignorant of his address to him; and insinuated, that if any advances in popularity could have been made by distinguishing him, he had not written without notice, or without reward.

He was once inclined to have presented his poem in person, and sent to the printer for a copy with that

design; but either his opinion changed, or his resolution deserted him, and he continued to resent neglect without attempting to force himself into regard.

Nor was the publick much more favourable than his patron; for only seventy-two were sold, though the performance was much commended by some whose judgment in that kind of writing is generally allowed. But Savage easily reconciled himself to mankind, without imputing any defect to his work, by observing, that his poem was unluckily published two days after the prorogation of the parliament, and, by consequence, at a time when all those who could be expected to regard it were in the hurry of preparing for their departure, or engaged in taking leave of others upon their dismission from publick affairs.

It must be, however, allowed, in justification of the publick, that this performance is not the most excellent of Mr. Savage's works; and that, though it cannot be denied to contain many striking sentiments, majestick lines, and just observations, it is, in general, not sufficiently polished in the language, or enlivened in the imagery, or digested in the plan.

Thus his poem contributed nothing to the alleviation of his poverty, which was such as very few could have supported with equal patience; but to which, it must likewise be confessed, that few would have been exposed, who received punctually fifty pounds a year; a salary which, though by no means equal to the demands of vanity and luxury, is yet found sufficient to support families above want, and

was, undoubtedly, more than the necessities of life require.

But no sooner had he received his pension, than he withdrew to his darling privacy, from which he returned, in a short time, to his former distress, and, for some part of the year, generally lived by chance, eating only when he was invited to the tables of his acquaintances, from which the meanness of his dress often excluded him, when the politeness and variety of his conversation would have been thought a sufficient recompense for his entertainment.

He lodged as much by accident as he dined, and passed the night sometimes in mean houses, which are set open at night to any casual wanderers, sometimes in cellars, among the riot and filth of the meanest and most profligate of the rabble; and sometimes, when he had not money to support even the expenses of these receptacles, walked about the streets till he was weary, and lay down in the summer upon a bulk, or in the winter, with his associates in poverty, among the ashes of a glass-house.

In this manner were passed those days and those nights which nature had enabled him to have employed in elevated speculations, useful studies, or pleasing conversation. On a bulk, in a cellar, or in a glass-house, among thieves and beggars, was to be found the author of the Wanderer; the man of exalted sentiments, extensive views, and curious observations; the man whose remarks on life might have assisted the statesman, whose ideas of virtue might have enlightened the moralist, whose elo-

quence might have influenced senates, and whose delicacy might have polished courts.

It cannot but be imagined that such necessities might sometimes force him upon disreputable practices; and it is probable that these lines in the Wanderer were occasioned by his reflections on his own conduct:

> Though misery leads to happiness, and truth,
> Unequal to the load, this languid youth,
> (O, let none censure, if, untried by grief,
> If, amidst woe, untempted by relief,)
> He stoop'd reluctant to low arts of shame,
> Which then, e'en then, he scorn'd and blush'd to name.

Whoever was acquainted with him was certain to be solicited for small sums, which the frequency of the request made in time considerable; and he was, therefore, quickly shunned by those who were become familiar enough to be trusted with his necessities; but his rambling manner of life, and constant appearance at houses of publick resort, always procured him a new succession of friends, whose kindness had not been exhausted by repeated requests; so that he was seldom absolutely without resources, but had in his utmost exigencies this comfort, that he always imagined himself sure of speedy relief.

It was observed, that he always asked favours of this kind without the least submission or apparent consciousness of dependence, and that he did not seem to look upon a compliance with his request, as an obligation that deserved any extraordinary acknowledgments; but a refusal was resented by him as an affront, or complained of as an injury; nor did

he readily reconcile himself to those who either denied to lend, or gave him afterwards any intimation that they expected to be repaid.

He was sometimes so far compassionated by those who knew both his merit and distresses, that they received him into their families; but they soon discovered him to be a very incommodious inmate; for, being always accustomed to an irregular manner of life, he could not confine himself to any stated hours, or pay any regard to the rules of a family, but would prolong his conversation till midnight, without considering that business might require his friend's application in the morning; and, when he had persuaded himself to retire to bed, was not, without equal difficulty, called up to dinner; it was, therefore, impossible to pay him any distinction without the entire subversion of all economy, a kind of establishment which, wherever he went, he always appeared ambitious to overthrow.

It must, therefore, be acknowledged, in justification of mankind, that it was not always by the negligence or coldness of his friends that Savage was distressed, but because it was in reality very difficult to preserve him long in a state of ease. To supply him with money was a hopeless attempt; for no sooner did he see himself master of a sum sufficient to set him free from care for a day, than he became profuse and luxurious. When once he had entered a tavern, or engaged in a scheme of pleasure, he never retired till want of money obliged him to some new expedient. If he was entertained in a family, nothing

was any longer to be regarded there but amusements and jollity; wherever Savage entered, he immediately expected that order and business should fly before him, that all should thenceforward be left to hazard, and that no dull principle of domestick management should be opposed to his inclination, or intrude upon his gaiety.

His distresses, however afflictive, never dejected him; in his lowest state he wanted not spirit to assert the natural dignity of wit, and was always ready to repress that insolence which superiority of fortune incited, and to trample on that reputation which rose upon any other basis than that of merit: he never admitted any gross familiarities, or submitted to be treated otherwise than as an equal. Once, when he was without lodging, meat, or clothes, one of his friends, a man not indeed remarkable for moderation in his prosperity, left a message, that he desired to see him about nine in the morning. Savage knew that his intention was to assist him; but was very much disgusted that he should presume to prescribe the hour of his attendance, and, I believe, refused to visit him, and rejected his kindness.

The same invincible temper, whether firmness or obstinacy, appeared in his conduct to the lord Tyrconnel, from whom he very frequently demanded, that the allowance which was once paid him should be restored; but with whom he never appeared to entertain, for a moment, the thought of soliciting a reconciliation, and whom he treated, at once, with all the haughtiness of superiority, and all the bitter-

ness of resentment. He wrote to him, not in a style of supplication or respect, but of reproach, menace, and contempt; and appeared determined, if he ever regained his allowance, to hold it only by the right of conquest.

As many more can discover that a man is richer than that he is wiser than themselves, superiority of understanding is not so readily acknowledged as that of fortune; nor is that haughtiness, which the consciousness of great abilities incites, borne with the same submission as the tyranny of affluence; and, therefore, Savage, by asserting his claim to deference and regard, and by treating those with contempt whom better fortune animated to rebel against him, did not fail to raise a great number of enemies in the different classes of mankind. Those who thought themselves raised above him by the advantages of riches, hated him, because they found no protection from the petulance of his wit. Those who were esteemed for their writings feared him as a critick, and maligned him as a rival, and almost all the smaller wits were his professed enemies.

Among these Mr. Miller so far indulged his resentment as to introduce him in a farce, and direct him to be personated on the stage, in a dress like that which he then wore; a mean insult, which only insinuated that Savage had but one coat, and which was, therefore, despised by him rather than resented: for, though he wrote a lampoon against Miller, he never printed it; and as no other person ought to prosecute that revenge from which the person who

was injured desisted, I shall not preserve what Mr. Savage suppressed; of which the publication would indeed have been a punishment too severe for so impotent an assault.

The great hardships of poverty were to Savage not the want of lodging or of food, but the neglect and contempt which it drew upon him. He complained that, as his affairs grew desperate, he found his reputation for capacity visibly decline; that his opinion in questions of criticism was no longer regarded, when his coat was out of fashion; and that those who, in the interval of his prosperity, were always encouraging him to great undertakings, by encomiums on his genius and assurances of success, now received any mention of his designs with coldness, thought that the subjects on which he proposed to write were very difficult, and were ready to inform him, that the event of a poem was uncertain, that an author ought to employ much time in the consideration of his plan, and not presume to sit down to write in confidence of a few cursory ideas, and a superficial knowledge; difficulties were started on all sides, and he was no longer qualified for any performance but the Volunteer Laureate.

Yet even this kind of contempt never depressed him; for he always preserved a steady confidence in his own capacity, and believed nothing above his reach, which he should at any time earnestly endeavour to attain. He formed schemes of the same kind with regard to knowledge and to fortune, and flattered himself with advances to be made in science,

as with riches, to be enjoyed in some distant period of his life. For the acquisition of knowledge he was, indeed, far better qualified than for that of riches; for he was naturally inquisitive, and desirous of the conversation of those from whom any information was to be obtained, but by no means solicitous to improve those opportunities that were sometimes offered of raising his fortune; and he was remarkably retentive of his ideas, which, when once he was in possession of them, rarely forsook him; a quality which could never be communicated to his money.

While he was thus wearing out his life in expectation that the queen would some time recollect her promise, he had recourse to the usual practice of writers, and published proposals for printing his works by subscription, to which he was encouraged by the success of many who had not a better right to the favour of the publick; but, whatever was the reason, he did not find the world equally inclined to favour him; and he observed, with some discontent, that though he offered his works at half-a-guinea, he was able to procure but a small number in comparison with those who subscribed twice as much to Duck.

Nor was it without indignation that he saw his proposals neglected by the queen, who patronized Mr. Duck's with uncommon ardour, and incited a competition among those who attended the court, who should most promote his interest, and who should first offer a subscription. This was a distinction to which Mr. Savage made no scruple of assert-

ing, that his birth, his misfortunes, and his genius, gave him a fairer title, than could be pleaded by him on whom it was conferred.

Savage's applications were, however, not universally unsuccessful; for some of the nobility countenanced his design, encouraged his proposals, and subscribed with great liberality. He related of the duke of Chandos particularly, that, upon receiving his proposals, he sent him ten guineas.

But the money which his subscriptions afforded him was not less volatile than that which he received from his other schemes; whenever a subscription was paid him, he went to a tavern; and, as money so collected is necessarily received in small sums, he never was able to send his poems to the press, but, for many years, continued his solicitation, and squandered whatever he obtained.

The project of printing his works was frequently revived; and, as his proposals grew obsolete, new ones were printed with fresher dates. To form schemes for the publication, was one of his favourite amusements; nor was he ever more at ease than when, with any friend who readily fell in with his schemes, he was adjusting the print, forming the advertisements, and regulating the dispersion of his new edition, which he really intended, some time, to publish; and which, as long experience had shown him the impossibility of printing the volume together, he, at last, determined to divide into weekly or monthly numbers, that the profits of the first might supply the expenses of the next.

Thus he spent his time in mean expedients and tormenting suspense, living, for the greatest part, in the fear of prosecutions from his creditors, and, consequently, skulking in obscure parts of the town, of which he was no stranger to the remotest corners. But, wherever he came, his address secured him friends, whom his necessities soon alienated; so that he had, perhaps, a more numerous acquaintance than any man ever before attained, there being scarcely any person eminent on any account to whom he was not known, or whose character he was not, in some degree, able to delineate.

To the acquisition of this extensive acquaintance every circumstance of his life contributed. He excelled in the arts of conversation, and, therefore, willingly practised them. He had seldom any home, or even a lodging, in which he could be private; and, therefore, was driven into publick-houses for the common conveniencies of life and supports of nature. He was always ready to comply with every invitation, having no employment to withhold him, and often no money to provide for himself; and, by dining with one company, he never failed of obtaining an introduction into another.

Thus dissipated was his life, and thus casual his subsistence; yet did not the distraction of his views hinder him from reflection, nor the uncertainty of his condition depress his gaiety. When he had wandered about without any fortunate adventure by which he was led into a tavern, he sometimes retired into the fields, and was able to employ his

mind in study, or amuse it with pleasing imaginations; and seldom appeared to be melancholy, but when some sudden misfortune had just fallen upon him, and even then, in a few moments, he would disentangle himself from his perplexity, adopt the subject of conversation, and apply his mind wholly to the objects that others presented to it.

This life, unhappy as it may be already imagined, was yet imbittered, in 1738, with new calamities. The death of the queen deprived him of all the prospects of preferment, with which he so long entertained his imagination; and, as sir Robert Walpole had before given him reason to believe that he never intended the performance of his promise, he was now abandoned again to fortune.

He was, however, at that time, supported by a friend; and as it was not his custom to look out for distant calamities, or to feel any other pain than that which forced itself upon his senses, he was not much afflicted at his loss, and, perhaps, comforted himself that his pension would be now continued without the annual tribute of a panegyrick.

Another expectation contributed likewise to support him: he had taken a resolution to write a second tragedy upon the story of sir Thomas Overbury, in which he preserved a few lines of his former play, but made a total alteration of the plan, added new incidents, and introduced new characters; so that it was a new tragedy, not a revival of the former.

Many of his friends blamed him for not making choice of another subject; but, in vindication of him-

self, he asserted, that it was not easy to find a better; and that he thought it his interest to extinguish the memory of the first tragedy, which he could only do by writing one less defective upon the same story; by which he should entirely defeat the artifice of the booksellers, who, after the death of any author of reputation, are always industrious to swell his works, by uniting his worst productions with his best.

In the execution of this scheme, however, he proceeded but slowly, and probably only employed himself upon it when he could find no other amusement; but he pleased himself with counting the profits, and perhaps imagined, that the theatrical reputation which he was about to acquire would be equivalent to all that he had lost by the death of his patroness.

He did not, in confidence of his approaching riches, neglect the measures proper to secure the continuance of his pension, though some of his favourers thought him culpable for omitting to write on her death; but, on her birthday, next year, he gave a proof of the solidity of his judgment, and the power of his genius. He knew that the track of elegy had been so long beaten, that it was impossible to travel in it without treading in the footsteps of those who had gone before him; and that, therefore, it was necessary, that he might distinguish himself from the herd of encomiasts, to find out some new walk of funeral panegyrick.

This difficult task he performed in such a manner that his poem may be justly ranked among the best

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pieces that the death of princes has produced. By transferring the mention of her death to her birth-day, he has formed a happy combination of topicks, which any other man would have thought it very difficult to connect in one view, but which he has united in such a manner, that the relation between them appears natural; and it may be justly said, that what no other man would have thought on, it now appears scarcely possible for any man to miss.

The beauty of this peculiar combination of images is so masterly, that it is sufficient to set this poem above censure; and, therefore, it is not necessary to mention many other delicate touches which may be found in it, and which would deservedly be admired in any other performance.

To these proofs of his genius may be added, from the same poem, an instance of his prudence, an excellence for which he was not so often distinguished; he does not forget to remind the king, in the most delicate and artful manner, of continuing his pension.

With regard to the success of this address, he was, for some time, in suspense, but was in no great degree solicitous about it; and continued his labour upon his new tragedy with great tranquillity, till the friend, who had for a considerable time supported him, removing his family to another place, took occasion to dismiss him. It then became necessary to inquire more diligently what was determined in his affair, having reason to suspect that no great favour was intended him, because he had not received his pension at the usual time.

It is said, that he did not take those methods of retrieving his interest, which were most likely to succeed; and some of those who were employed in the exchequer cautioned him against too much violence in his proceedings: but Mr. Savage, who seldom regulated his conduct by the advice of others, gave way to his passion, and demanded of sir Robert Walpole, at his levee, the reason of the distinction that was made between him and the other pensioners of the queen, with a degree of roughness, which, perhaps, determined him to withdraw what had been only delayed.

Whatever was the crime of which he was accused or suspected, and whatever influence was employed against him, he received, soon after, an account that took from him all hopes of regaining his pension; and he had now no prospect of subsistence but from his play, and he knew no way of living for the time required to finish it.

So peculiar were the misfortunes of this man, deprived of an estate and title by a particular law, exposed and abandoned by a mother, defrauded by a mother of a fortune which his father had allotted him, he entered the world without a friend; and though his abilities forced themselves into esteem and reputation, he was never able to obtain any real advantage, and whatever prospects arose, were always intercepted as he began to approach them. The king's intentions in his favour were frustrated; his dedication to the prince, whose generosity on every other occasion was eminent, procured him no

reward; sir Robert Walpole, who valued himself upon keeping his promise to others, broke it to him without regret; and the bounty of the queen was, after her death, withdrawn from him, and from him only.

Such were his misfortunes, which yet he bore, not only with decency, but with cheerfulness; nor was his gaiety clouded even by his last disappointments, though he was, in a short time, reduced to the lowest degree of distress, and often wanted both lodging and food. At this time he gave another instance of the insurmountable obstinacy of his spirit: his clothes were worn out; and he received notice, that at a coffee-house some clothes and linen were left for him: the person who sent them did not, I believe, inform him to whom he was to be obliged, that he might spare the perplexity of acknowledging the benefit; but though the offer was so far generous, it was made with some neglect of ceremonies, which Mr. Savage so much resented, that he refused the present, and declined to enter the house till the clothes that had been designed for him were taken away.

His distress was now publickly known, and his friends, therefore, thought it proper to concert some measures for his relief; and one of them wrote a letter to him, in which he expressed his concern "for the miserable withdrawing of his pension;" and gave him hopes, that, in a short time, he should find himself supplied with a competence, "without any dependence on those little creatures which we are pleased to call the great."

The scheme proposed for this happy and independent subsistence was, that he should retire into Wales, and receive an allowance of fifty pounds a year, to be raised by a subscription, on which he was to live privately in a cheap place, without aspiring any more to affluence, or having any further care of reputation.

This offer Mr. Savage gladly accepted, though with intentions very different from those of his friends; for they proposed that he should continue an exile from London for ever, and spend all the remaining part of his life at Swansea; but he designed only to take the opportunity, which their scheme offered him, of retreating for a short time, that he might prepare his play for the stage, and his other works for the press, and then to return to London to exhibit his tragedy, and live upon the profits of his own labour.

With regard to his works, he proposed very great improvements, which would have required much time, or great application; and, when he had finished them, he designed to do justice to his subscribers, by publishing them according to his proposals.

As he was ready to entertain himself with future pleasures, he had planned out a scheme of life for the country, of which he had no knowledge but from pastorals and songs. He imagined that he should be transported to scenes of flowery felicity, like those which one poet has reflected to another; and had projected a perpetual round of innocent pleasures, of which he suspected no interruption from pride, or ignorance, or brutality.

With these expectations he was so enchanted, that when he was once gently reproached by a friend for submitting to live upon a subscription, and advised rather by a resolute exertion of his abilities to support himself, he could not bear to debar himself from the happiness which was to be found in the calm of a cottage, or lose the opportunity of listening, without intermission, to the melody of the nightingale, which he believed was to be heard from every bramble, and which he did not fail to mention as a very important part of the happiness of a country life.

While this scheme was ripening, his friends directed him to take a lodging in the liberties of the Fleet, that he might be secure from his creditors, and sent him, every Monday, a guinea, which he commonly spent before the next morning, and trusted, after his usual manner, the remaining part of the week to the bounty of fortune.

He now began very sensibly to feel the miseries of dependence. Those by whom he was to be supported began to prescribe to him with an air of authority, which he knew not how decently to resent, nor patiently to bear; and he soon discovered, from the conduct of most of his subscribers, that he was yet in the hands of "little creatures."

Of the insolence that he was obliged to suffer, he gave many instances, of which none appeared to raise his indignation to a greater height than the method which was taken of furnishing him with clothes. Instead of consulting him, and allowing

him to send a tailor his orders for what they thought proper to allow him, they proposed to send for a tailor to take his measure, and then to consult how they should equip him.

This treatment was not very delicate, nor was it such as Savage's humanity would have suggested to him on a like occasion; but it had scarcely deserved mention, had it not, by affecting him in an uncommon degree, shown the peculiarity of his character. Upon hearing the design that was formed, he came to the lodging of a friend with the most violent agonies of rage; and, being asked what it could be that gave him such disturbance, he replied, with the utmost vehemence of indignation, "that they had sent for a tailor to measure him."

How the affair ended was never inquired, for fear of renewing his uneasiness. It is probable that, upon recollection, he submitted with a good grace to what he could not avoid, and that he discovered no resentment where he had no power.

He was, however, not humbled to implicit and universal compliance; for when the gentleman, who had first informed him of the design to support him by a subscription, attempted to procure a reconciliation with the lord Tyrconnel, he could by no means be prevailed upon to comply with the measures that were proposed.

A letter was written for him[k] to sir William Lemon, to prevail upon him to interpose his good offices with lord Tyrconnel, in which he solicited sir

[k] By Mr. Pope. Dr. J.

William's assistance "for a man who really needed it as much as any man could well do;" and informed him, that he was retiring "for ever to a place where he should no more trouble his relations, friends, or enemies;" he confessed, that his passion had betrayed him to some conduct, with regard to lord Tyrconnel, for which he could not but heartily ask his pardon; and as he imagined lord Tyrconnel's passion might be yet so high that he would not "receive a letter from him," begged that sir William would endeavour to soften him; and expressed his hopes that he would comply with his request, and that "so small a relation would not harden his heart against him."

That any man should presume to dictate a letter to him, was not very agreeable to Mr. Savage; and, therefore, he was, before he had opened it, not much inclined to approve it. But when he read it, he found it contained sentiments entirely opposite to his own, and, as he asserted, to the truth, and, therefore, instead of copying it, wrote his friend a letter full of masculine resentment and warm expostulations. He very justly observed, that the style was too supplicatory, and the representation too abject, and that he ought, at least, to have made him complain with "the dignity of a gentleman in distress." He declared that he would not write the paragraph in which he was to ask lord Tyrconnel's pardon; for "he despised his pardon, and, therefore, could not heartily, and would not hypocritically, ask it." He remarked, that his friend made a very unreason-

able distinction between himself and him; for, says he, when you mention men of high rank "in your own character," they are, "those little creatures whom we are pleased to call the great;" but when you address them "in mine," no servility is sufficiently humble. He then, with great propriety, explained the ill consequences which might be expected from such a letter, which his relations would print in their own defence, and which would for ever be produced as a full answer to all that he should allege against them; for he always intended to publish a minute account of the treatment which he had received. It is to be remembered, to the honour of the gentleman by whom this letter was drawn up, that he yielded to Mr. Savage's reasons, and agreed that it ought to be suppressed.

After many alterations and delays, a subscription was at length raised, which did not amount to fifty pounds a year, though twenty were paid by one gentleman[1]; such was the generosity of mankind, that what had been done by a player without solicitation, could not now be effected by application and interest; and Savage had a great number to court and to obey for a pension less than that which Mrs. Oldfield paid him without exacting any servilities.

Mr. Savage, however, was satisfied, and willing to retire, and was convinced that the allowance, though scanty, would be more than sufficient for him, being now determined to commence a rigid economist, and to live according to the exactest rules of fru-

[1] Mr. Pope. R.

gality; for nothing was, in his opinion, more contemptible, than a man, who, when he knew his income, exceeded it; and yet he confessed that instances of such folly were too common, and lamented that some men were not to be trusted with their own money.

Full of these salutary resolutions, he left London in July, 1739, having taken leave, with great tenderness, of his friends, and parted from the author of this narrative with tears in his eyes. He was furnished with fifteen guineas, and informed that they would be sufficient, not only for the expense of his journey, but for his support in Wales for some time; and that there remained but little more of the first collection. He promised a strict adherence to his maxims of parsimony, and went away in the stage-coach; nor did his friends expect to hear from him till he informed them of his arrival at Swansea.

But, when they least expected, arrived a letter dated the fourteenth day after his departure, in which he sent them word, that he was yet upon the road and without money; and that he, therefore, could not proceed without a remittance. They then sent him the money that was in their hands, with which he was enabled to reach Bristol, from whence he was to go to Swansea by water.

At Bristol he found an embargo laid upon the shipping, so that he could not immediately obtain a passage; and being, therefore, obliged to stay there some time, he, with his usual felicity, ingratiated himself with many of the principal inhabitants, was

invited to their houses, distinguished at their publick feasts, and treated with a regard that gratified his vanity, and, therefore, easily engaged his affection.

He began, very early after his retirement, to complain of the conduct of his friends in London, and irritated many of them so much by his letters, that they withdrew, however honourably, their contributions; and it is believed, that little more was paid him than the twenty pounds a year, which were allowed him by the gentleman who proposed the subscription.

After some stay at Bristol he retired to Swansea, the place originally proposed for his residence, where he lived about a year, very much dissatisfied with the diminution of his salary; but contracted, as in other places, acquaintance with those who were most distinguished in that country, among whom he has celebrated Mr. Powell and Mrs. Jones, by some verses which he inserted in the Gentleman's Magazine[m].

Here he completed his tragedy, of which two acts were wanting when he left London; and was desirous of coming to town, to bring it upon the stage. This design was very warmly opposed; and he was advised, by his chief benefactor, to put it into the hands of Mr. Thomson and Mr. Mallet, that it might be fitted for the stage, and to allow his friends to receive the profits, out of which an annual pension should be paid him.

This proposal he rejected with the utmost con-

[m]Reprinted in the late collection.

tempt. He was by no means convinced that the judgment of those, to whom he was required to submit, was superiour to his own. He was now determined, as he expressed it, to be "no longer kept in leading-strings," and had no elevated idea of "his bounty, who proposed to pension him out of the profits of his own labours."

He attempted in Wales to promote a subscription for his works, and had once hopes of success; but, in a short time afterwards, formed a resolution of leaving that part of the country, to which he thought it not reasonable to be confined, for the gratification of those who, having promised him a liberal income, had no sooner banished him to a remote corner, than they reduced his allowance to a salary scarcely equal to the necessities of life.

His resentment of this treatment, which, in his own opinion, at least, he had not deserved, was such, that he broke off all correspondence with most of his contributors, and appeared to consider them as persecutors and oppressors; and, in the latter part of his life, declared that their conduct toward him since his departure from London "had been perfidiousness improving on perfidiousness, and inhumanity on inhumanity."

It is not to be supposed, that the necessities of Mr. Savage did not sometimes incite him to satirical exaggerations of the behaviour of those by whom he thought himself reduced to them. But it must be granted, that the diminution of his allowance was a great hardship, and that those who withdrew their

subscriptions from a man, who, upon the faith of their promise, had gone into a kind of banishment, and abandoned all those by whom he had been before relieved in his distresses, will find it no easy task to vindicate their conduct.

It may be alleged, and perhaps justly, that he was petulant and contemptuous; that he more frequently reproached his subscribers for not giving him more, than thanked them for what he received; but it is to be remembered, that his conduct, and this is the worst charge that can be drawn up against him, did them no real injury, and that it, therefore, ought rather to have been pitied than resented; at least, the resentment it might provoke ought to have been generous and manly; epithets which his conduct will hardly deserve, that starves the man whom he has persuaded to put himself into his power.

It might have been reasonably demanded by Savage, that they should, before they had taken away what they promised, have replaced him in his former state; that they should have taken no advantages from the situation to which the appearance of their kindness had reduced him, and that he should have been recalled to London before he was abandoned. He might justly represent, that he ought to have been considered as a lion in the toils, and demand to be released before the dogs should be loosed upon him.

He endeavoured, indeed, to release himself, and, with an intent to return to London, went to Bristol, where a repetition of the kindness which he had

formerly found invited him to stay. He was not only caressed and treated, but had a collection made for him of about thirty pounds, with which it had been happy if he had immediately departed for London; but his negligence did not suffer him to consider, that such proofs of kindness were not often to be expected, and that this ardour of benevolence was, in a great degree, the effect of novelty, and might, probably, be every day less; and, therefore, he took no care to improve the happy time, but was encouraged by one favour to hope for another, till, at length, generosity was exhausted, and officiousness wearied.

Another part of his misconduct was the practice of prolonging his visits to unseasonable hours, and disconcerting all the families into which he was admitted. This was an errour in a place of commerce, which all the charms of his conversation could not compensate; for what trader would purchase such airy satisfaction by the loss of solid gain, which must be the consequence of midnight merriment, as those hours which were gained at night were generally lost in the morning?

Thus Mr. Savage, after the curiosity of the inhabitants was gratified, found the number of his friends daily decreasing, perhaps, without suspecting for what reason their conduct was altered; for he still continued to harass, with his nocturnal intrusions, those that yet countenanced him, and admitted him to their houses.

But he did not spend all the time of his residence at Bristol, in visits or at taverns; for he sometimes

returned to his studies, and began several considerable designs. When he felt an inclination to write, he always retired from the knowledge of his friends, and lay hid in an obscure part of the suburbs, till he found himself again desirous of company, to which it is likely that intervals of absence made him more welcome.

He was always full of his design of returning to London, to bring his tragedy upon the stage; but, having neglected to depart with the money that was raised for him, he could not afterwards procure a sum sufficient to defray the expenses of his journey; nor, perhaps, would a fresh supply have had any other effect than by putting immediate pleasures in his power, to have driven the thoughts of his journey out of his mind.

While he was thus spending the day in contriving a scheme for the morrow, distress stole upon him by imperceptible degrees. His conduct had already wearied some of those, who were at first enamoured of his conversation; but he might, perhaps, still have devolved to others, whom he might have entertained with equal success, had not the decay of his clothes made it no longer consistent with their vanity to admit him to their tables, or to associate with him in publick places. He now began to find every man from home at whose house he called; and was, therefore, no longer able to procure the necessaries of life, but wandered about the town, slighted and neglected, in quest of a dinner, which he did not always obtain.

To complete his misery, he was pursued by the officers, for small debts which he had contracted; and was, therefore, obliged to withdraw from the small number of friends from whom he had still reason to hope for favours. His custom was to lie in bed the greatest part of the day, and to go out in the dark with the utmost privacy, and after having paid his visit, return again before morning to his lodging, which was in the garret of an obscure inn.

Being thus excluded on one hand, and confined on the other, he suffered the utmost extremities of poverty, and often fasted so long, that he was seized with faintness, and had lost his appetite, not being able to bear the smell of meat, till the action of his stomach was restored by a cordial.

In this distress, he received a remittance of five pounds from London, with which he provided himself a decent coat, and determined to go to London, but unhappily spent his money at a favourite tavern. Thus was he again confined to Bristol, where he was every day hunted by bailiffs. In this exigence he once more found a friend, who sheltered him in his house, though at the usual inconveniencies with which his company was attended; for he could neither be persuaded to go to bed in the night, nor to rise in the day.

It is observable, that in these various scenes of misery, he was always disengaged and cheerful: he at some times pursued his studies, and at others continued or enlarged his epistolary correspondence; nor was he ever so far dejected as to endeavour to

procure an increase of his allowance by any other methods than accusations and reproaches.

He had now no longer any hopes of assistance from his friends at Bristol, who, as merchants, and by consequence sufficiently studious of profit, cannot be supposed to have looked with much compassion upon negligence and extravagance, or to think any excellence equivalent to a fault of such consequence, as neglect of economy. It is natural to imagine, that many of those, who would have relieved his real wants, were discouraged from the exertion of their benevolence, by observation of the use which was made of their favours, and conviction that relief would only be momentary, and that the same necessity would quickly return.

At last he quitted the house of his friend, and returned to his lodging at the inn, still intending to set out in a few days for London; but on the 10th of January, 1742–3, having been at supper with two of his friends, he was, at his return to his lodgings, arrested for a debt of about eight pounds, which he owed at a coffee-house, and conducted to the house of a sheriff's officer. The account which he gives of this misfortune, in a letter to one of the gentlemen, with whom he had supped, is too remarkable to be omitted.

"It was not a little unfortunate for me, that I spent yesterday's evening with you; because the hour hindered me from entering on my new lodging; however, I have now got one, but such an one as I believe nobody would choose.

"I was arrested at the suit of Mrs. Read, just as I was going up stairs to bed, at Mrs. Bowyer's; but taken in so private a manner, that I believe nobody at the White Lion is apprised of it; though I let the officers know the strength, or rather weakness, of my pocket, yet they treated me with the utmost civility; and even when they conducted me to confinement, it was in such a manner, that I verily believe I could have escaped, which I would rather be ruined than have done, notwithstanding the whole amount of my finances was but threepence halfpenny.

"In the first place, I must insist, that you will industriously conceal this from Mrs. S——s, because I would not have her good-nature suffer that pain which, I know, she would be apt to feel on this occasion.

"Next, I conjure you, dear sir, by all the ties of friendship, by no means to have one uneasy thought on my account; but to have the same pleasantry of countenance, and unruffled serenity of mind, which (God be praised!) I have in this, and have had in a much severer calamity. Furthermore, I charge you, if you value my friendship as truly as I do yours, not to utter, or even harbour, the least resentment against Mrs. Read. I believe she has ruined me, but I freely forgive her; and (though I will never more have any intimacy with her) I would, at a due distance, rather do her an act of good, than ill will. Lastly, (pardon the expression,) I absolutely command you not to offer me any pecuniary assistance, nor to attempt getting me any from any one of

your friends. At another time, or on any other occasion, you may, dear friend, be well assured, I would rather write to you in the submissive style of a request, than that of a peremptory command.

"However, that my truly valuable friend may not think I am too proud to ask a favour, let me intreat you to let me have your boy to attend me for this day, not only for the sake of saving me the expense of porters, but for the delivery of some letters to people whose names I would not have known to strangers.

"The civil treatment I have thus far met from those whose prisoner I am, makes me thankful to the Almighty, that, though he has thought fit to visit me (on my birthnight) with affliction, yet (such is his great goodness!) my affliction is not without alleviating circumstances. I murmur not; but am all resignation to the divine will. As to the world, I hope that I shall be endued by heaven with that presence of mind, that serene dignity in misfortune, that constitutes the character of a true nobleman; a dignity far beyond that of coronets; a nobility arising from the just principals of philosophy, refined and exalted by those of christianity."

He continued five days at the officer's, in hopes that he should be able to procure bail and avoid the necessity of going to prison. The state in which he passed his time, and the treatment which he received, are very justly expressed by him in a letter which he wrote to a friend: "The whole day," says he, "has been employed in various people's filling my head

with their foolish chimerical systems, which has obliged me coolly (as far as nature will admit) to digest, and accommodate myself to, every different person's way of thinking; hurried from one wild system to another, till it has quite made a chaos of my imagination, and nothing done—promised—disappointed—ordered to send, every hour, from one part of the town to the other."

When his friends, who had hitherto caressed and applauded, found that to give bail and pay the debt was the same, they all refused to preserve him from a prison at the expense of eight pounds; and, therefore, after having been for some time at the officer's house, "at an immense expense," as he observes in his letter, he was at length removed to Newgate.

This expense he was enabled to support by the generosity of Mr. Nash, at Bath, who, upon receiving from him an account of his condition, immediately sent him five guineas, and promised to promote his subscription at Bath with all his interest.

By his removal to Newgate, he obtained at least a freedom from suspense, and rest from the disturbing vicissitudes of hope and disappointment; he now found that his friends were only companions, who were willing to share his gaiety, but not to partake of his misfortunes; and, therefore, he no longer expected any assistance from them.

It must, however, be observed of one gentleman, that he offered to release him by paying the debt; but that Mr. Savage would not consent, I suppose,

because he thought he had before been too burdensome to him.

He was offered by some of his friends that a collection should be made for his enlargement; but he "treated the proposal," and declared[n] "he should again treat it, with disdain. As to writing any mendicant letters, he had too high a spirit, and determined only to write to some ministers of state, to try to regain his pension."

He continued to complain[o] of those that had sent him into the country, and objected to them, that he had "lost the profits of his play, which had been finished three years:" and in another letter declares his resolution to publish a pamphlet, that the world might know how "he had been used."

This pamphlet was never written; for he, in a very short time, recovered his usual tranquillity, and cheerfully applied himself to more inoffensive studies. He, indeed, steadily declared, that he was promised a yearly allowance of fifty pounds, and never received half the sum; but he seemed to resign himself to that as well as to other misfortunes, and lose the remembrance of it in his amusements and employments.

The cheerfulness with which he bore his confinement appears from the following letter, which he wrote, January the 30th, to one of his friends in London.

"I now write to you from my confinement in Newgate, where I have been ever since Monday

[n] In a letter after his confinement. Dr. J.

[o] Letter, Jan. 15.

last was se'nnight, and where I enjoy myself with much more tranquillity than I have known for upwards of a twelvemonth past; having a room entirely to myself, and pursuing the amusement of my poetical studies, uninterrupted, and agreeable to my mind. I thank the Almighty, I am now all collected in myself; and, though my person is in confinement, my mind can expatiate on ample and useful subjects with all the freedom imaginable. I am now more conversant with the Nine than ever, and if, instead of a Newgate-bird, I may be allowed to be a bird of the muses, I assure you, sir, I sing very freely in my cage; sometimes, indeed, in the plaintive notes of the nightingale; but at others in the cheerful strains of the lark."

In another letter he observes, that he ranges from one subject to another, without confining himself to any particular task; and that he was employed one week upon one attempt, and the next upon another.

Surely the fortitude of this man deserves, at least, to be mentioned with applause; and, whatever faults may be imputed to him, the virtue of suffering well cannot be denied him. The two powers which, in the opinion of Epictetus, constituted a wise man, are those of bearing and forbearing; which cannot indeed be affirmed to have been equally possessed by Savage; and, indeed, the want of one obliged him very frequently to practise the other.

He was treated by Mr. Dagge, the keeper of the prison, with great humanity; was supported by him at his own table, without any certainty of recom-

pense; had a room to himself, to which he could at any time retire from all disturbance; was allowed to stand at the door of the prison, and sometimes taken out into the fields[p]; so that he suffered fewer hardships in prison than he had been accustomed to undergo in the greatest part of his life.

The keeper did not confine his benevolence to a gentle execution of his office, but made some overtures to the creditor for his release, though without effect; and continued, during the whole time of his imprisonment, to treat him with the utmost tenderness and civility.

Virtue is undoubtedly most laudable in that state which makes it most difficult; and, therefore, the humanity of a gaoler certainly deserves this publick attestation; and the man, whose heart has not been hardened by such an employment, may be justly proposed as a pattern of benevolence. If an inscription was once engraved, "to the honest toll-gatherer," less honours ought not to be paid "to the tender gaoler."

Mr. Savage very frequently received visits, and sometimes presents, from his acquaintances; but they did not amount to a subsistence, for the greater part of which he was indebted to the generosity of this keeper; but these favours, however they might endear to him the particular persons from whom he received them, were very far from impressing upon his mind any advantageous ideas of the people of Bristol, and, therefore, he thought he could not more

[p] See this confirmed, Gent. Mag. vol. lvii. 1140. N.

properly employ himself in prison, than in writing a poem, called London and Bristol delineated[q].

When he had brought this poem to its present state, which, without considering the chasm, is not perfect, he wrote to London an account of his design, and informed his friend[r], that he was determined to print it with his name; but enjoined him not to communicate his intention to his Bristol acquaintance. The gentleman, surprised at his resolution, endeavoured to dissuade him from publishing it, at least from prefixing his name; and declared, that he could not reconcile the injunction of secrecy with his resolution to own it at its first appearance. To this Mr. Savage returned an answer agreeable to his character, in the following terms:

"I received yours this morning; and not without a little surprise at the contents. To answer a question with a question, you ask me concerning London and Bristol, Why will I add *delineated?* Why did Mr. Wollaston add the same word to his Religion of Nature? I suppose that it was his will and pleasure to add it in his case; and it is mine to do so in my own. You are pleased to tell me, that you understand not why secrecy is enjoined, and yet I intend to set my name to it. My answer is — I have my private reasons, which I am not obliged to explain to any one. You doubt my friend Mr. S——[s] would not approve of it—And what is it to me

[q] The author preferred this title to that of London and Bristol compared; which, when he began the piece, he intended to prefix to it. Dr. J.

[r] This friend was Mr. Cave, the printer. N.

[s] Mr. Strong, of the post-office. N.

whether he does or not? Do you imagine that Mr. S——is to dictate to me? If any man who calls himself my friend should assume such an air, I would spurn at his friendship with contempt. You say, I seem to think so by not letting him know it.—And suppose I do, what then? Perhaps I can give reasons for that disapprobation, very foreign from what you would imagine. You go on in saying, suppose I should not put my name to it—My answer is, that I will not suppose any such thing, being determined to the contrary: neither, sir, would I have you suppose, that I applied to you for want of another press: nor would I have you imagine, that I owe Mr. S——obligations which I do not."

Such was his imprudence, and such his obstinate adherence to his own resolutions, however absurd! A prisoner! supported by charity! and, whatever insults he might have received during the latter part of his stay in Bristol, once caressed, esteemed, and presented with a liberal collection, he could forget, on a sudden, his danger and his obligations, to gratify the petulance of his wit, or the eagerness of his resentment, and publish a satire, by which he might reasonably expect that he should alienate those who then supported him, and provoke those whom he could neither resist nor escape.

This resolution, from the execution of which it is probable that only his death could have hindered him, is sufficient to show how much he disregarded all considerations that opposed his present passions, and how readily he hazarded all future advantages

for any immediate gratifications. Whatever was his predominant inclination, neither hope nor fear hindered him from complying with it; nor had opposition any other effect than to heighten his ardour, and irritate his vehemence.

This performance was, however, laid aside, while he was employed in soliciting assistance from several great persons; and one interruption succeeding another hindered him from supplying the chasm, and, perhaps, from retouching the other parts, which he can hardly be imagined to have finished in his own opinion: for it is very unequal, and some of the lines are rather inserted to rhyme to others, than to support or improve the sense; but the first and last parts are worked up with great spirit and elegance.

His time was spent in the prison, for the most part, in study, or in receiving visits; but sometimes he descended to lower amusements, and diverted himself in the kitchen with the conversation of the criminals: for it was not pleasing to him to be much without company; and, though he was very capable of a judicious choice, he was often contented with the first that offered: for this he was sometimes reproved by his friends, who found him surrounded with felons; but the reproof was on that, as on other occasions, thrown away; he continued to gratify himself, and to set very little value on the opinion of others.

But here, as in every other scene of his life, he made use of such opportunities as occurred of benefiting those who were more miserable than himself,

and was always ready to perform any office of humanity to his fellow-prisoners.

He had now ceased from corresponding with any of his subscribers except one, who yet continued to remit him the twenty pounds a year which he had promised him, and by whom it was expected that he would have been in a very short time enlarged, because he had directed the keeper to inquire after the state of his debts.

However, he took care to enter his name according to the forms of the court[t], that the creditor might be obliged to make him some allowance, if he was continued a prisoner, and, when on that occasion he appeared in the hall, was treated with very unusual respect.

But the resentment of the city was afterwards raised by some accounts that had been spread of the satire; and he was informed that some of the merchants intended to pay the allowance which the law required, and to detain him a prisoner at their own expense. This he treated as an empty menace; and, perhaps, might have hastened the publication, only to show how much he was superiour to their insults, had not all his schemes been suddenly destroyed.

When he had been six months in prison, he received from one of his friends[u], in whose kindness he had the greatest confidence, and on whose assistance he chiefly depended, a letter, that contained a

[t] See Gent. Mag. vol. lvii. 1040. N.

[u] Mr. Pope. See some extracts of letters from that gentleman to and concerning Mr. Savage, in Ruffhead's Life of Pope, p. 502. R.

charge of very atrocious ingratitude, drawn up in such terms as sudden resentment dictated. Henley, in one of his advertisements, had mentioned "Pope's treatment of Savage." This was supposed, by Pope, to be the consequence of a complaint made by Savage to Henley, and was, therefore, mentioned by him with much resentment. Mr. Savage returned a very solemn protestation of his innocence, but, however, appeared much disturbed at the accusation. Some days afterwards he was seized with a pain in his back and side, which, as it was not violent, was not suspected to be dangerous; but, growing daily more languid and dejected, on the 25th of July he confined himself to his room, and a fever seized his spirits. The symptoms grew every day more formidable, but his condition did not enable him to procure any assistance. The last time that the keeper saw him was on July the 31st, 1743; when Savage, seeing him at his bedside, said, with an uncommon earnestness, "I have something to say to you, sir;" but, after a pause, moved his hand in a melancholy manner; and, finding himself unable to recollect what he was going to communicate, said, "'Tis gone!" The keeper soon after left him; and the next morning he died. He was buried in the church-yard of St. Peter, at the expense of the keeper.

Such were the life and death of Richard Savage, a man equally distinguished by his virtues and vices; and at once remarkable for his weaknesses and abilities.

He was of a middle stature, of a thin habit of

body, a long visage, coarse features, and melancholy aspect; of a grave and manly deportment, a solemn dignity of mien, but which, upon a nearer acquaintance, softened into an engaging easiness of manners. His walk was slow, and his voice tremulous and mournful. He was easily excited to smiles, but very seldom provoked to laughter.

His mind was in an uncommon degree vigorous and active. His judgment was accurate, his apprehension quick, and his memory so tenacious, that he was frequently observed to know what he had learned from others, in a short time, better than those by whom he was informed; and could frequently recollect incidents, with all their combination of circumstances, which few would have regarded at the present time, but which the quickness of his apprehension impressed upon him. He had the peculiar felicity, that his attention never deserted him; he was present to every object, and regardful of the most trifling occurrences. He had the art of escaping from his own reflections, and accommodating himself to every new scene.

To this quality is to be imputed the extent of his knowledge, compared with the small time which he spent in visible endeavours to acquire it. He mingled in cursory conversation with the same steadiness of attention as others apply to a lecture; and, amidst the appearance of thoughtless gaiety, lost no new idea that was started, nor any hint that could be improved. He had, therefore, made in coffee-houses the same proficiency as others in their closets: and

it is remarkable, that the writings of a man of little education and little reading have an air of learning scarcely to be found in any other performances, but which, perhaps, as often obscures as embellishes them.

His judgment was eminently exact, both with regard to writings and to men. The knowledge of life was indeed his chief attainment; and it is not without some satisfaction that I can produce the suffrage of Savage in favour of human nature, of which he never appeared to entertain such odious ideas as some, who, perhaps, had neither his judgment nor experience, have published, either in ostentation of their sagacity, vindication of their crimes, or gratification of their malice.

His method of life particularly qualified him for conversation, of which he knew how to practise all the graces. He was never vehement or loud, but at once modest and easy, open and respectful; his language was vivacious and elegant, and equally happy upon grave or humorous subjects. He was generally censured for not knowing when to retire; but that was not the defect of his judgment, but of his fortune: when he left his company, he was frequently to spend the remaining part of the night in the street, or at least was abandoned to gloomy reflections, which it is not strange that he delayed as long as he could; and sometimes forgot that he gave others pain to avoid it himself.

It cannot be said, that he made use of his abilities for the direction of his own conduct: an irregular and dissipated manner of life had made him the

slave of every passion that happened to be excited by the presence of its object, and that slavery to his passions reciprocally produced a life irregular and dissipated. He was not master of his own motions, nor could promise any thing for the next day.

With regard to his ecomony, nothing can be added to the relation of his life. He appeared to think himself born to be supported by others, and dispensed from all necessity of providing for himself; he therefore never prosecuted any scheme of advantage, nor endeavoured even to secure the profits which his writings might have afforded him. His temper was, in consequence of the dominion of his passions, uncertain and capricious; he was easily engaged, and easily disgusted; but he is accused of retaining his hatred more tenaciously than his benevolence.

He was compassionate both by nature and principle, and always ready to perform offices of humanity; but when he was provoked (and very small offences were sufficient to provoke him) he would prosecute his revenge with the utmost acrimony till his passion had subsided.

His friendship was, therefore, of little value; for, though he was zealous in the support or vindication of those whom he loved, yet it was always dangerous to trust him, because he considered himself as discharged, by the first quarrel, from all ties of honour or gratitude; and would betray those secrets which, in the warmth of confidence, had been imparted to him. This practice drew upon him an uni-

versal accusation of ingratitude: nor can it be denied that he was very ready to set himself free from the load of an obligation; for he could not bear to conceive himself in a state of dependence, his pride being equally powerful with his other passions, and appearing in the form of insolence at one time, and of vanity at another. Vanity, the most innocent species of pride, was most frequently predominant: he could not easily leave off, when he had once begun to mention himself or his works; nor ever read his verses without stealing his eyes from the page, to discover, in the faces of his audience, how they were affected with any favourite passage.

A kinder name than that of vanity ought to be given to the delicacy with which he was always careful to separate his own merit from every other man's, and to reject that praise to which he had no claim. He did not forget, in mentioning his performances, to mark every line that had been suggested or amended; and was so accurate, as to relate that he owed three words in the Wanderer to the advice of his friends.

His veracity was questioned, but with little reason; his accounts, though not indeed always the same, were generally consistent. When he loved any man, he suppressed all his faults; and, when he had been offended by him, concealed all his virtues; but his characters were generally true, so far as he proceeded; though it cannot be denied, that his partiality might have sometimes the effect of falsehood.

In cases indifferent, he was zealous for virtue,

truth, and justice; he knew very well the necessity of goodness to the present and future happiness of mankind; nor is there, perhaps, any writer, who has less endeavoured to please by flattering the appetites, or perverting the judgment.

As an author, therefore, and he now ceases to influence mankind in any other character, if one piece which he had resolved to suppress be excepted, he has very little to fear from the strictest moral or religious censure. And though he may not be altogether secure against the objections of the critick, it must, however, be acknowledged, that his works are the productions of a genius truly poetical; and, what many writers who have been more lavishly applauded cannot boast, that they have an original air, which has no resemblance of any foregoing writer, that the versification and sentiments have a cast peculiar to themselves, which no man can imitate with success, because what was nature in Savage would in another be affectation. It must be confessed that his descriptions are striking, his images animated, his fictions justly imagined, and his allegories artfully pursued; that his diction is elevated, though sometimes forced, and his numbers sonorous and majestick, though frequently sluggish and encumbered. Of his style, the general fault is harshness, and its general excellence is dignity: of his sentiments, the prevailing beauty is simplicity, and uniformity the prevailing defect.

For his life, or for his writings, none, who candidly consider his fortune, will think an apology either

necessary or difficult. If he was not always sufficiently instructed in his subject, his knowledge was, at least, greater than could have been attained by others in the same state. If his works were sometimes unfinished, accuracy cannot reasonably be expected from a man oppressed with want, which he has no hope of relieving but by a speedy publication. The insolence and resentment of which he is accused were not easily to be avoided by a great mind, irritated by perpetual hardships, and constrained hourly to return the spurns of contempt, and repress the insolence of prosperity; and vanity may surely be readily pardoned in him, to whom life afforded no other comforts than barren praises, and the consciousness of deserving them.

Those are no proper judges of his conduct, who have slumbered away their time on the down of plenty; nor will any wise man presume to say, "Had I been in Savage's condition, I should have lived or written better than Savage."

This relation will not be wholly without its use, if those, who languish under any part of his sufferings, shall be enabled to fortify their patience, by reflecting that they feel only those afflictions from which the abilities of Savage did not exempt him; or if those, who, in confidence of superiour capacities or attainments, disregard the common maxims of life, shall be reminded, that nothing will supply the want of prudence, and that negligence and irregularity, long continued, will make knowledge useless, wit ridiculous, and genius contemptible.

SWIFT

AN account of Dr. Swift has been already collected, with great diligence and acuteness, by Dr. Hawkesworth, according to a scheme which I laid before him in the intimacy of our friendship. I cannot, therefore, be expected to say much of a life, concerning which I had long since communicated my thoughts to a man capable of dignifying his narrations with so much elegance of language and force of sentiment.

Jonathan Swift was, according to an account said to be written by himself[v], the son of Jonathan Swift, an attorney, and was born at Dublin, on St. Andrew's day, 1667: according to his own report, as delivered by Pope to Spence, he was born at Leicester, the son of a clergyman, who was minister of a parish in Herefordshire[w]. During his life the place of his birth was undetermined. He was contented to be called an Irishman by the Irish; but would occasionally call himself an Englishman. The question may, without much regret, be left in the obscurity in which he delighted to involve it.

Whatever was his birth, his education was Irish. He was sent, at the age of six, to the school at Kilkenny, and in his fifteenth year, 1682, was admitted into the university of Dublin.

In his academical studies he was either not diligent or not happy. It must disappoint every reader's

[v] Mr. Sheridan, in his Life of Swift, observes, that this account was really written by the dean, and now exists in his own handwriting in the library of Dublin college. R.

[w] Spence's Anecdotes, vol. ii. p. 273.

expectation, that, when at the usual time he claimed the bachelorship of arts, he was found by the examiners too conspicuously deficient for regular admission, and obtained his degree, at last, by *special favour;* a term used in that university to denote want of merit.

Of this disgrace it may easily be supposed that he was much ashamed, and shame had its proper effect in producing reformation. He resolved, from that time, to study eight hours a day, and continued his industry for seven years, with what improvement is sufficiently known. This part of his story well deserves to be remembered; it may afford useful admonition and powerful encouragement to men whose abilities have been made for a time useless by their passions or pleasures, and who, having lost one part of life in idleness, are tempted to throw away the remainder in despair.

In this course of daily application he continued three years longer at Dublin; and in this time, if the observation and memory of an old companion may be trusted, he drew the first sketch of his Tale of a Tub.

When he was about one-and-twenty, 1688, being, by the death of Godwin Swift, his uncle, who had supported him, left without subsistence, he went to consult his mother, who then lived at Leicester, about the future course of his life; and by her direction solicited the advice and patronage of sir William Temple, who had married one of Mrs. Swift's relations, and whose father, sir John Temple, master

of the Rolls in Ireland, had lived in great familiarity of friendship with Godwin Swift, by whom Jonathan had been to that time maintained.

Temple received with sufficient kindness the nephew of his father's friend, with whom he was, when they conversed together, so much pleased, that he detained him two years in his house. Here he became known to king William, who sometimes visited Temple when he was disabled by the gout, and, being attended by Swift in the garden, showed him how to cut asparagus in the Dutch way.

King William's notions were all military; and he expressed his kindness to Swift by offering to make him a captain of horse.

When Temple removed to Moor-park, he took Swift with him; and when he was consulted by the earl of Portland about the expedience of complying with a bill then depending for making parliaments triennial, against which king William was strongly prejudiced, after having in vain tried to show the earl that the proposal involved nothing dangerous to royal power, he sent Swift for the same purpose to the king. Swift, who probably was proud of his employment, and went with all the confidence of a young man, found his arguments, and his art of displaying them, made totally ineffectual by the predetermination of the king; and used to mention this disappointment as his first antidote against vanity.

Before he left Ireland he contracted a disorder, as he thought, by eating too much fruit. The orig-

inal of diseases is commonly obscure. Almost every boy eats as much fruit as he can get, without any great inconvenience. The disease of Swift was giddiness with deafness, which attacked him from time to time, began very early, pursued him through life, and, at last, sent him to the grave, deprived of reason.

Being much oppressed at Moor-park by this grievous malady, he was advised to try his native air, and went to Ireland; but, finding no benefit, returned to sir William, at whose house he continued his studies, and is known to have read, among other books, Cyprian and Irenæus. He thought exercise of great necessity, and used to run half a mile up and down a hill every two hours.

It is easy to imagine that the mode in which his first degree was conferred, left him no great fondness for the university of Dublin, and, therefore, he resolved to become a master of arts at Oxford. In the testimonial which he produced, the words of disgrace were omitted[x]; and he took his master's degree July 5, 1692, with such reception and regard as fully contented him.

While he lived with Temple, he used to pay his mother, at Leicester, a yearly visit. He travelled on foot, unless some violence of weather drove him into a wagon; and at night he would go to a penny lodg-

[x] The words *speciali gratia*, or *per specialem gratiam*, were used in the record of his degree in the college of Dublin; but were never entered in any *testimonium*, which merely states the fact of a degree having been taken, and, therefore, the account that they were omitted as a favour to Swift is incorrect.

ing, where he purchased clean sheets for sixpence. This practice lord Orrery imputes to his innate love of grossness and vulgarity: some may ascribe it to his desire of surveying human life through all its varieties; and others, perhaps, with equal probability, to a passion which seems to have been deeply fixed in his heart, the love of a shilling.

In time he began to think that his attendance at Moor-park deserved some other recompense than the pleasure, however mingled with improvement, of Temple's conversation; and grew so impatient, that, 1694, he went away in discontent.

Temple, conscious of having given reason for complaint, is said to have made him deputy-master of the rolls, in Ireland; which, according to his kinsman's account, was an office which he knew him not able to discharge. Swift, therefore, resolved to enter into the church, in which he had at first no higher hopes than of the chaplainship to the factory, at Lisbon; but being recommended to lord Capel, he obtained the prebend of Kilroot, in Connor, of about a hundred pounds a year.

But the infirmities of Temple made a companion like Swift so necessary, that he invited him back, with a promise to procure him English preferment in exchange for the prebend, which he desired him to resign[y]. With this request Swift complied, having, perhaps, equally repented their separation, and

[y] The affecting and amiable circumstances attending this resignation are not mentioned by Johnson, but may be seen in Sheridan's Life of Swift, p. 21, 22.

they lived on together with mutual satisfaction; and, in the four years that passed between his return and Temple's death, it is probable that he wrote the Tale of a Tub, and the Battle of the Books.

Swift began early to think, or to hope, that he was a poet, and wrote Pindarick odes to Temple, to the king, and to the Athenian society, a knot of obscure men[z], who published a periodical pamphlet of answers to questions, sent, or supposed to be sent, by letters. I have been told that Dryden, having perused these verses, said, "Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet;" and that this denunciation was the motive of Swift's perpetual malevolence to Dryden.

In 1699 Temple died, and left a legacy with his manuscripts to Swift, for whom he had obtained, from king William, a promise of the first prebend that should be vacant at Westminster or Canterbury.

That this promise might not be forgotten, Swift dedicated to the king the posthumous works with which he was intrusted; but neither the dedication, nor tenderness for the man whom he once had treated with confidence and fondness, revived in king William the remembrance of his promise. Swift awhile attended the court; but soon found his solicitations hopeless.

He was then invited by the earl of Berkeley to accompany him into Ireland, as his private secretary; but, after having done the business till their arrival at Dublin, he then found that one Bush had

[z] The publisher of this collection was John Dunton. R.

persuaded the earl that a clergyman was not a proper secretary, and had obtained the office for himself. In a man like Swift, such circumvention and inconstancy must have excited violent indignation.

But he had yet more to suffer. Lord Berkeley had the disposal of the deanery of Derry, and Swift expected to obtain it; but by the secretary's influence, supposed to have been secured by a bribe, it was bestowed on somebody else; and Swift was dismissed with the livings of Laracor and Rathbeggin, in the diocese of Meath, which together did not equal half the value of the deanery.

At Laracor he increased the parochial duty by reading prayers on Wednesdays and Fridays, and performed all the offices of his profession with great decency and exactness.

Soon after his settlement at Laracor, he invited to Ireland the unfortunate Stella; a young woman, whose name was Johnson, the daughter of the steward of sir William Temple, who, in consideration of her father's virtues, left her a thousand pounds[a]. With her came Mrs. Dingley, whose whole fortune was twenty-seven pounds a year for her life. With these ladies he passed his hours of relaxation, and to them he opened his bosom; but they never resided in the same house, nor did he see either

[a] How does it appear that Stella's father was steward to sir William Temple? In his will he does not say one word of her father's services, and did not leave Esther Johnson a thousand pounds, but a lease. His bequest runs thus: "I leave the lease of some lands I have in Morristown, in the county of Wicklow, in Ireland, to Esther Johnson, *servant* to my sister Gifford." M.

without a witness. They lived at the parsonage when Swift was away; and, when he returned, removed to a lodging, or to the house of a neigbouring clergyman.

Swift was not one of those minds which amaze the world with early pregnancy: his first work, except his few poetical essays, was the Dissensions in Athens and Rome, published, 1701, in his thirty-fourth year. After its appearance, paying a visit to some bishop, he heard mention made of the new pamphlet that Burnet had written, replete with political knowledge. When he seemed to doubt Burnet's right to the work, he was told, by the bishop, that he was "a young man;" and, still persisting to doubt, that he was "a very positive young man."

Three years afterwards, 1704, was published the Tale of a Tub: of this book charity may be persuaded to think, that it might be written by a man of a peculiar character, without ill intention; but it is certainly of dangerous example. That Swift was its author, though it be universally believed, was never owned by himself, nor very well proved by any evidence; but no other claimant can be produced, and he did not deny it when archbishop Sharpe and the dutchess of Somerset, by showing it to the queen, debarred him from a bishoprick.

When this wild work first raised the attention of the publick, Sacheverell, meeting Smalridge, tried to flatter him, by seeming to think him the author; but Smalridge answered, with indignation: "Not all that you and I have in the world, nor all that

ever we shall have, should hire me to write the Tale of a Tub."

The digressions relating to Wotton and Bentley must be confessed to discover want of knowledge, or want of integrity; he did not understand the two controversies, or he willingly misrepresented them. But wit can stand its ground against truth only a little while. The honours due to learning have been justly distributed by the decision of posterity.

The Battle of the Books is so like the Combat des Livres, which the same question concerning the ancients and moderns had produced in France, that the improbability of such a coincidence of thoughts, without communication, is not, in my opinion, balanced by the anonymous protestation prefixed, in which all knowledge of the French book is peremptorily disowned[b].

For some time after Swift was probably employed in solitary study, gaining the qualifications requisite for future eminence. How often he visited England, and with what diligence he attended his parishes, I know not. It was not till about four years afterwards that he became a professed author; and then, one year, 1708, produced the Sentiments of a Church of England Man; the ridicule of astrology, under the name of Bickerstaff; the Argument against abolishing Christianity, and the Defence of the Sacramental Test.

[b] See Sheridan's Life, edit. 1784, p. 525; where are some remarks on this passage. R.

The Sentiments of a Church of England Man is written with great coolness, moderation, ease, and perspicuity. The Argument against abolishing Christianity is a very happy and judicious irony. One passage in it deserves to be selected.

"If christianity were once abolished, how could the freethinkers, the strong reasoners, and the men of profound learning, be able to find another subject so calculated, in all points, whereon to display their abilities? What wonderful productions of wit should we be deprived of from those, whose genius, by continual practice, hath been wholly turned upon raillery and invectives against religion, and would, therefore, never be able to shine, or distinguish themselves, upon any other subject! We are daily complaining of the great decline of wit among us, and would take away the greatest, perhaps the only, topick we have left. Who would ever have suspected Asgill for a wit, or Toland for a philosopher, if the inexhaustible stock of christianity had not been at hand to provide them with materials? What other subject, through all art or nature, could have produced Tindal for a profound author, or furnished him with readers? It is the wise choice of the subject that alone adorns and distinguishes the writer. For, had an hundred such pens as these been employed on the side of religion, they would have immediately sunk into silence and oblivion."

The reasonableness of a test is not hard to be proved; but, perhaps, it must be allowed, that the proper test has not been chosen.

The attention paid to the papers published under the name of Bickerstaff, induced Steele, when he projected the Tatler, to assume an appellation which had already gained possession of the reader's notice.

In the year following he wrote a Project for the Advancement of Religion, addressed to lady Berkeley; by whose kindness it is not unlikely that he was advanced to his benefices. To this project, which is formed with great purity of intention, and displayed with sprightliness and elegance, it can only be objected, that, like many projects, it is, if not generally impracticable, yet evidently hopeless, as it supposes more zeal, concord, and perseverance, than a view of mankind gives reason for expecting.

He wrote, likewise, this year, a Vindication of Bickerstaff; and an explanation of an ancient Prophecy; part written after the facts, and the rest never completed, but well planned to excite amazement.

Soon after began the busy and important part of Swift's life. He was employed, 1710, by the primate of Ireland, to solicit the queen for a remission of the first fruits and twentieth parts to the Irish clergy. With this purpose he had recourse to Mr. Harley, to whom he was mentioned as a man neglected and oppressed by the last ministry, because he had refused to cooperate with some of their schemes. What he had refused has never been told; what he had suffered was, I suppose, the exclusion from a bishoprick by the remonstrances of Sharpe, whom he describes as "the harmless tool of others' hate,"

and whom he represents as afterwards "suing for pardon[c]."

Harley's designs and situation were such as made him glad of an auxiliary so well qualified for his service; he, therefore, soon admitted him to familiarity, whether ever to confidence, some have made a doubt; but it would have been difficult to excite his zeal, without persuading him that he was trusted, and not very easy to delude him by false persuasions.

He was certainly admitted to those meetings in which the first hints and original plan of action are supposed to have been formed; and was one of the sixteen ministers, or agents of the ministry, who met weekly at each other's houses, and were united by the name of *brother*.

Being not immediately considered as an obdurate tory, he conversed indiscriminately with all the wits, and was yet the friend of Steele; who, in the Tatler, which began in April, 1709, confesses the advantages of his conversation, and mentions something contributed by him to his paper. But he was now immerging into political controversy; for the year 1710 produced the Examiner, of which Swift wrote thirty-three papers. In argument he may be allowed to have the advantage; for where a wide system of conduct, and the whole of a publick character, is laid open to inquiry, the accuser having the choice

[c] The whole story of this bishoprick is a very blind one. That it was ever intended for Swift, or that Sharpe and the dutchess of Somerset ever dissuaded queen Anne from promoting him, is not ascertained by any satisfactory evidence. M.

of facts, must be very unskilful if he does not prevail; but, with regard to wit, I am afraid none of Swift's papers will be found equal to those by which Addison opposed him[d].

He wrote, in the year 1711, a Letter to the October Club, a number of tory gentlemen sent from the country to parliament, who formed themselves into a club, to the number of about a hundred, and met to animate the zeal and raise the expectations of each other. They thought, with great reason, that the ministers were losing opportunities; that sufficient use was not made of the ardour of the nation; they called loudly for more changes, and stronger efforts; and demanded the punishment of part, and the dismission of the rest, of those whom they considered as publick robbers.

Their eagerness was not gratified by the queen, or by Harley. The queen was probably slow because she was afraid; and Harley was slow because he was doubtful: he was a tory only by necessity, or for convenience; and, when he had power in his hands, had no settled purpose for which he should employ it; forced to gratify, to a certain degree, the tories who supported him, but unwilling to make his reconcilement to the whigs utterly desperate, he corresponded at once with the two expectants of the crown, and kept, as has been observed, the succession undetermined. Not knowing what to do, he did

[d] Mr. Sheridan, however, says, that Addison's last Whig Examiner was published October 12, 1711; and Swift's first Examiner, on the 10th of the following November. R.

nothing; and, with the fate of a double-dealer, at last he lost his power, but kept his enemies.

Swift seems to have concurred in opinion with the October Club; but it was not in his power to quicken the tardiness of Harley, whom he stimulated as much as he could, but with little effect. He that knows not whither to go, is in no haste to move. Harley, who was perhaps not quick by nature, became yet more slow by irresolution; and was content to hear that dilatoriness lamented as natural, which he applauded in himself as politick.

Without the tories, however, nothing could be done; and, as they were not to be gratified, they must be appeased; and the conduct of the minister, if it could not be vindicated, was to be plausibly excused.

Early in the next year he published a Proposal for correcting, improving, and ascertaining the English Tongue, in a letter to the earl of Oxford; written without much knowledge of the general nature of language, and without any accurate inquiry into the history of other tongues. The certainty and stability which, contrary to all experience, he thinks attainable, he proposes to secure by instituting an academy; the decrees of which every man would have been willing, and many would have been proud to disobey, and which, being renewed by successive elections, would, in a short time, have differed from itself.

Swift now attained the zenith of his political importance: he published, 1712, the Conduct of the

Allies, ten days before the parliament assembled. The purpose was to persuade the nation to a peace; and never had any writer more success. The people, who had been amused with bonfires and triumphal processions, and looked with idolatry on the general and his friends, who, as they thought, had made England the arbitress of nations, were confounded between shame and rage, when they found that "mines had been exhausted, and millions destroyed," to secure the Dutch, or aggrandize the emperour, without any advantage to ourselves; that we had been bribing our neighbours to fight their own quarrel; and that amongst our enemies, we might number our allies.

That is now no longer doubted, of which the nation was then first informed, that the war was unnecessarily protracted to fill the pockets of Marlborough; and that it would have been continued without end, if he could have continued his annual plunder. But Swift, I suppose, did not yet know what he has since written, that a commission was drawn which would have appointed him general for life, had it not become ineffectual by the resolution of lord Cowper, who refused the seal.

"Whatever is received," say the schools, "is received in proportion to the recipient." The power of a political treatise depends much upon the disposition of the people; the nation was then combustible, and a spark set it on fire. It is boasted, that between November and January eleven thousand were sold; a great number at that time, when we

were not yet a nation of readers. To its propagation certainly no agency of power or influence was wanting. It furnished arguments for conversation, speeches for debate, and materials for parliamentary resolutions.

Yet, surely, whoever surveys this wonder-working pamphlet with cool perusal, will confess that its efficacy was supplied by the passions of its readers; that it operates by the mere weight of facts, with very little assistance from the hand that produced them.

This year, 1712, he published his Reflections on the Barrier Treaty, which carries on the design of his Conduct of the Allies, and shows how little regard in that negotiation had been shown to the interest of England, and how much of the conquered country had been demanded by the Dutch.

This was followed by Remarks on the Bishop of Sarum's Introduction to his third volume of the History of the Reformation; a pamphlet which Burnet published as an alarm, to warn the nation of the approach of popery. Swift, who seems to have disliked the bishop with something more than political aversion, treats him like one whom he is glad of an opportunity to insult.

Swift, being now the declared favourite and supposed confidant of the tory ministry, was treated by all that depended on the court with the respect which dependants know how to pay. He soon began to feel part of the misery of greatness; he that could say he knew him, considered himself as having for-

tune in his power. Commissions, solicitations, remonstrances crowded about him; he was expected to do every man's business, to procure employment for one, and to retain it for another. In assisting those who addressed him, he represents himself as sufficiently diligent; and desires to have others believe, what he probably believed himself, that by his interposition many whigs of merit, and among them Addison and Congreve, were continued in their places. But every man of known influence has so many petitions which he cannot grant, that he must necessarily offend more than he gratifies, because the preference given to one affords all the rest a reason for complaint. "When I give away a place," said Lewis the fourteenth, "I make a hundred discontented, and one ungrateful."

Much has been said of the equality and independence which he preserved in his conversation with the ministers, of the frankness of his remonstrances, and the familiarity of his friendship. In accounts of this kind a few single incidents are set against the general tenour of behaviour. No man, however, can pay a more servile tribute to the great, than by suffering his liberty in their presence to aggrandize him in his own esteem. Between different ranks of the community there is necessarily some distance; he who is called by his superiour to pass the interval, may properly accept the invitation; but petulance and obtrusion are rarely produced by magnanimity; nor have often any nobler cause than the pride of importance, and the malice of inferiority. He who

knows himself necessary may set, while that necessity lasts, a high value upon himself; as, in a lower condition, a servant eminently skilful may be saucy; but he is saucy only because he is servile. Swift appears to have preserved the kindness of the great when they wanted him no longer; and, therefore, it must be allowed, that the childish freedom, to which he seems enough inclined, was overpowered by his better qualities.

His disinterestedness has been likewise mentioned; a strain of heroism, which would have been in his condition romantick and superfluous. Ecclesiastical benefices, when they become vacant, must be given away; and the friends of power may, if there be no inherent disqualification, reasonably expect them. Swift accepted, 1713, the deanery of St. Patrick, the best preferment that his friends could venture[e] to give him. That ministry was, in a great degree, supported by the clergy, who were not yet reconciled to the author of the Tale of a Tub, and would not, without much discontent and indignation, have borne to see him installed in an English cathedral.

He refused, indeed, fifty pounds from lord Oxford; but he accepted, afterwards, a draught of a thousand upon the exchequer, which was intercepted by the queen's death, and which he resigned, as he says himself, "multa gemens," with many a groan[f].

[e] This emphatic word has not escaped the watchful eye of Dr. Warton, who has placed a nota bene at it.

[f] See this affair very differently represented in Swift's Panegyrist, Sheridan, p. 530.

In the midst of his power and his politicks, he kept a journal of his visits, his walks, his interviews with ministers, and quarrels with his servant, and transmitted it to Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Dingley, to whom he knew that whatever befell him was interesting, and no accounts could be too minute. Whether these diurnal trifles were properly exposed to eyes which had never received any pleasure from the presence of the dean, may be reasonably doubted: they have, however, some odd attraction; the reader finding frequent mention of names which he has been used to consider as important, goes on in hope of information; and, as there is nothing to fatigue attention, if he is disappointed he can hardly complain. It is easy to perceive, from every page, that though ambition pressed Swift into a life of bustle, the wish for a life of ease was always returning.

He went to take possession of his deanery as soon as he had obtained it; but he was not suffered to stay in Ireland more than a fortnight, before he was recalled to England, that he might reconcile lord Oxford and lord Bolingbroke, who began to look on one another with malevolence, which every day increased, and which Bolingbroke appeared to retain in his last years.

Swift contrived an interview, from which they both departed discontented: he procured a second, which only convinced him that the feud was irreconcilable: he told them his opinion, that all was

lost. This denunciation was contradicted by Oxford; but Bolingbroke whispered that he was right.

Before this violent dissension had shattered the ministry, Swift had published, in the beginning of the year 1714, the publick Spirit of the Whigs, in answer to the Crisis, a pamphlet for which Steele was expelled from the house of commons. Swift was now so far alienated from Steele, as to think him no longer entitled to decency, and, therefore, treats him sometimes with contempt, and sometimes with abhorrence.

In this pamphlet the Scotch were mentioned in terms so provoking to that irritable nation, that resolving "not to be offended with impunity," the Scotch lords, in a body, demanded an audience of the queen, and solicited reparation. A proclamation was issued, in which three hundred pounds were offered for the discovery of the author. From this storm he was, as he relates, "secured by a sleight;" of what kind, or by whose prudence, is not known; and such was the increase of his reputation, that the Scottish "nation applied again that he would be their friend."

He was become so formidable to the whigs, that his familiarity with the ministers was clamoured at in parliament, particularly by two men, afterwards of great note, Aislabie and Walpole.

But, by the disunion of his great friends, his importance and designs were now at an end; and seeing his services at last useless, he retired, about June, 1714, into Berkshire, where, in the house of a friend,

he wrote what was then suppressed, but has since appeared under the title of Free Thoughts on the present State of Affairs.

While he was waiting in this retirement for events which time or chance might bring to pass, the death of the queen broke down at once the whole system of tory politicks; and nothing remained but to withdraw from the implacability of triumphant whiggism, and shelter himself in unenvied obscurity.

The accounts of his reception in Ireland, given by lord Orrery and Dr. Delany, are so different, that the credit of the writers, both undoubtedly veracious, cannot be saved, but by supposing, what I think is true, that they speak of different times. When Delany says, that he was received with respect, he means for the first fortnight, when he came to take legal possession; and when lord Orrery tells that he was pelted by the populace, he is to be understood of the time when, after the queen's death, he became a settled resident.

The archbishop of Dublin gave him at first some disturbance in the exercise of his jurisdiction; but it was soon discovered, that between prudence and integrity he was seldom in the wrong; and that, when he was right, his spirit did not easily yield to opposition.

Having so lately quitted the tumults of a party, and the intrigues of a court, they still kept his thoughts in agitation, as the sea fluctuates awhile when the storm has ceased. He, therefore, filled his hours with some historical attempts, relating to the

change of the ministers, and the conduct of the ministry. He, likewise, is said to have written a history of the four last years of queen Anne, which he began in her lifetime, and afterwards laboured with great attention, but never published. It was after his death in the hands of lord Orrery and Dr. King. A book under that title was published with Swift's name, by Dr. Lucas; of which I can only say, that it seemed by no means to correspond with the notions that I had formed of it, from a conversation which I once heard between the earl of Orrery and old Mr. Lewis.

Swift now, much against his will, commenced Irishman for life, and was to contrive how he might be best accommodated in a country where he considered himself as in a state of exile. It seems that his first recourse was to piety. The thoughts of death rushed upon him, at this time, with such incessant importunity, that they took possession of his mind, when he first waked, for many years together.

He opened his house by a publick table two days a week, and found his entertainments gradually frequented by more and more visitants of learning among the men, and of elegance among the women. Mrs. Johnson had left the country, and lived in lodgings not far from the deanery. On his publick days she regulated the table, but appeared at it as a mere guest, like other ladies.

On other days he often dined, at a stated price, with Mr. Worral, a clergyman of his cathedral, whose house was recommended by the peculiar neat-

ness and pleasantry of his wife. To this frugal mode of living, he was first disposed by care to pay some debts which he had contracted, and he continued it for the pleasure of accumulating money. His avarice, however, was not suffered to obstruct the claims of his dignity; he was served in plate, and used to say, that he was the poorest gentleman in Ireland that ate upon plate, and the richest that lived without a coach.

How he spent the rest of his time, and how he employed his hours of study, has been inquired with hopeless curiosity. For who can give an account of another's studies? Swift was not likely to admit any to his privacies, or to impart a minute account of his business or his leisure.

Soon after, 1716, in his forty-ninth year, he was privately married to Mrs. Johnson, by Dr. Ashe, bishop of Clogher, as Dr. Madden told me, in the garden. The marriage made no change in their mode of life; they lived in different houses, as before; nor did she ever lodge in the deanery but when Swift was seized with a fit of giddiness. "It would be difficult," says lord Orrery, "to prove that they were ever afterwards together without a third person."

The dean of St. Patrick's lived in a private manner, known and regarded only by his friends; till, about the year 1720, he, by a pamphlet, recommended to the Irish the use, and, consequently, the improvement of their manufacture. For a man to use the productions of his own labour is surely a natural

right, and to like best what he makes himself is a natural passion. But to excite this passion, and enforce this right, appeared so criminal to those who had an interest in the English trade, that the printer was imprisoned; and, as Hawkesworth justly observes, the attention of the publick being, by this outrageous resentment, turned upon the proposal, the author was by consequence made popular.

In 1723 died Mrs. Van Homrigh, a woman made unhappy by her admiration of wit, and ignominiously distinguished by the name of Vanessa, whose conduct has been already sufficiently discussed, and whose history is too well known to be minutely repeated. She was a young woman fond of literature, whom Decanus, the dean, called Cadenus by transposition of letters, took pleasure in directing and instructing; till, being proud of his praise, she grew fond of his person. Swift was then about forty-seven, at an age when vanity is strongly excited by the amorous attention of a young woman. If it be said that Swift should have checked a passion which he never meant to gratify, recourse must be had to that extenuation which he so much despised, "men are but men:" perhaps, however, he did not at first know his own mind, and, as he represents himself, was undetermined. For his admission of her courtship, and his indulgence of her hopes, after his marriage to Stella, no other honest plea can be found than that he delayed a disagreeable discovery from time to time, dreading the immediate bursts of distress, and watching for a favourable moment. She thought herself

neglected, and died of disappointment; having ordered, by her will, the poem to be published, in which Cadenus had proclaimed her excellence, and confessed his love. The effect of the publication upon the dean and Stella is thus related by Delany:

"I have good reason to believe that they both were greatly shocked and distressed (though it may be differently) upon this occasion. The dean made a tour to the south of Ireland, for about two months, at this time, to dissipate his thoughts, and give place to obloquy. And Stella retired, upon the earnest invitation of the owner, to the house of a cheerful, generous, good-natured friend of the dean's, whom she also much loved and honoured. There my informer often saw her; and, I have reason to believe, used his utmost endeavours to relieve, support, and amuse her, in this sad situation.

"One little incident he told me of on that occasion, I think I shall never forget. As her friend was an hospitable, open-hearted man, well-beloved and largely acquainted, it happened one day that some gentlemen dropped in to dinner, who were strangers to Stella's situation; and as the poem of Cadenus and Vanessa was then the general topick of conversation, one of them said, 'Surely that Vanessa must be an extraordinary woman, that could inspire the dean to write so finely upon her.' Mrs. Johnson smiled, and answered, 'that she thought that point not quite so clear; for it was well known the dean could write finely upon a broomstick.'"

The great acquisition of esteem and influence was

made by the Drapier's Letters, in 1724. One Wood, of Wolverhampton, in Staffordshire, a man enterprising and rapacious, had, as is said, by a present to the dutchess of Munster, obtained a patent, empowering him to coin one hundred and eighty thousand pounds of half-pence and farthings for the kingdom of Ireland, in which there was a very inconvenient and embarrassing scarcity of copper coin; so that it was possible to run in debt upon the credit of a piece of money; for the cook or keeper of an alehouse could not refuse to supply a man that had silver in his hand, and the buyer would not leave his money without change.

The project was therefore plausible. The scarcity, which was already great, Wood took care to make greater, by agents who gathered up the old half-pence; and was about to turn his brass into gold, by pouring the treasures of his new mint upon Ireland; when Swift, finding that the metal was debased to an enormous degree, wrote letters, under the name of M. B. Drapier, to show the folly of receiving, and the mischief that must ensue by giving gold and silver for coin worth, perhaps, not a third part of its nominal value.

The nation was alarmed; the new coin was universally refused; but the governors of Ireland considered resistance to the king's patent as highly criminal; and one Whitshed, then chief justice, who had tried the printer of the former pamphlet, and sent out the jury nine times, till, by clamour and menaces, they were frighted into a special verdict,

now presented the Drapier, but could not prevail on the grand jury to find the bill.

Lord Carteret and the privy council published a proclamation, offering three hundred pounds for discovering the author of the fourth letter. Swift had concealed himself from his printers, and trusted only his butler, who transcribed the paper. The man, immediately after the appearance of the proclamation, strolled from the house, and staid out all night, and part of the next day. There was reason enough to fear that he had betrayed his master for the reward; but he came home, and the dean ordered him to put off his livery, and leave the house; "for," says he, "I know that my life is in your power, and I will not bear, out of fear, either your insolence or negligence." The man excused his fault with great submission, and begged that he might be confined in the house while it was in his power to endanger his master; but the dean resolutely turned him out, without taking farther notice of him, till the term of information had expired, and then received him again. Soon afterwards he ordered him and the rest of the servants into his presence, without telling his intentions, and bade them take notice that their fellow-servant was no longer Robert the butler; but that his integrity had made him Mr. Blakeney, verger of St. Patrick's; an officer whose income was between thirty and forty pounds a year: yet he still continued, for some years, to serve his old master as his butler[g]."

[g] An account somewhat different from this is given by Mr. Sheridan, in his Life of Swift, p. 511. R.

Swift was known, from this time, by the appellation of *the dean*. He was honoured by the populace as the champion, patron, and instructor of Ireland; and gained such power as, considered both in its extent and duration, scarcely any man has ever enjoyed without greater wealth or higher station.

He was, from this important year, the oracle of the traders, and the idol of the rabble, and by consequence was feared and courted by all to whom the kindness of the traders or the populace was necessary. The Drapier was a sign; the Drapier was a health; and which way soever the eye or the ear was turned, some tokens were found of the nation's gratitude to the Drapier.

The benefit was indeed great; he had rescued Ireland from a very oppressive and predatory invasion; and the popularity which he had gained he was diligent to keep, by appearing forward and zealous on every occasion, where the publick interest was supposed to be involved. Nor did he much scruple to boast his influence; for when, upon some attempts to regulate the coin, archbishop Boulter, then one of the justices, accused him of exasperating the people, he exculpated himself by saying, "If I had lifted up my finger, they would have torn you to pieces."

But the pleasure of popularity was soon interrupted by domestick misery. Mrs. Johnson, whose conversation was to him the great softener of the ills of life, began in the year of the Drapier's triumph to decline; and, two years afterwards, was so wasted

with sickness. that her recovery was considered as hopeless.

Swift was then in England, and had been invited by lord Bolingbroke to pass the winter with him in France, but this call of calamity hastened him to Ireland; where, perhaps, his presence contributed to restore her to imperfect and tottering health.

He was now so much at ease, that, 1727, he returned to England; where he collected three volumes of Miscellanies, in conjunction with Pope, who prefixed a querulous and apologetical preface.

This important year sent likewise into the world, Gulliver's Travels; a production so new and strange, that it filled the reader with a mingled emotion of merriment and amazement. It was received with such avidity, that the price of the first edition was raised before the second could be made; it was read by the high and the low, the learned and illiterate. Criticism was for awhile lost in wonder; no rules of judgment were applied to a book written in open defiance of truth and regularity. But when distinctions came to be made, the part which gave the least pleasure was that which describes the Flying island, and that which gave most disgust must be the history of the Houyhnhnms.

While Swift was enjoying the reputation of his new work, the news of the king's death arrived; and he kissed the hands of the new king and queen three days after their accession.

By the queen, when she was princess, he had been treated with some distinction, and was well received

by her in her exaltation; but whether she gave hopes which she never took care to satisfy, or he formed expectations which she never meant to raise, the event was, that he always afterwards thought on her with malevolence, and particularly charged her with breaking her promise of some medals which she engaged to send him.

I know not whether she had not, in her turn, some reason for complaint. A letter was sent her, not so much entreating, as requiring her patronage of Mrs. Barber, an ingenious Irishwoman, who was then begging subscriptions for her poems. To this letter was subscribed the name of Swift, and it has all the appearances of his diction and sentiments; but it was not written in his hand, and had some little improprieties. When he was charged with this letter, he laid hold of the inaccuracies, and urged the improbability of the accusation; but never denied it; he shuffles between cowardice and veracity, and talks big when he says nothing[h].

He seemed desirous enough of recommencing courtier, and endeavoured to gain the kindness of Mrs. Howard, remembering what Mrs. Masham had performed in former times: but his flatteries were like those of other wits, unsuccessful; the lady either wanted power, or had no ambition of poetical immortality.

He was seized not long afterwards by a fit of giddiness, and again heard of the sickness and dan-

[h] It is but justice to the dean's memory, to refer to Mr. Sheridan's defence of him from this charge. See the Life of Swift, p. 458. R.

ger of Mrs. Johnson. He then left the house of Pope, as it seems, with very little ceremony, finding "that two sick friends cannot live together;" and did not write to him till he found himself at Chester.

He turned to a home of sorrow: poor Stella was sinking into the grave, and, after a languishing decay of about two months, died in her forty-fourth year, on January 28, 1728. How much he wished her life, his papers show; nor can it be doubted that he dreaded the death of her whom he loved most, aggravated by the consciousness that himself had hastened it.

Beauty and the power of pleasing, the greatest external advantages that woman can desire or possess, were fatal to the unfortunate Stella. The man whom she had the misfortune to love was, as Delany observes, fond of singularity, and desirous to make a mode of happiness for himself, different from the general course of things and order of providence. From the time of her arrival in Ireland he seems resolved to keep her in his power, and, therefore, hindered a match sufficiently advantageous, by accumulating unreasonable demands, and prescribing conditions that could not be performed. While she was at her own disposal he did not consider his possession as secure; resentment, ambition, or caprice, might separate them; he was, therefore, resolved to make "assurance doubly sure," and to appropriate her by a private marriage, to which he had annexed the expectation of all the pleasures of

perfect friendship, without the uneasiness of conjugal restraint. But with this state poor Stella was not satisfied; she never was treated as a wife, and to the world she had the appearance of a mistress. She lived sullenly on, in hope that in time he would own and receive her; but the time did not come till the change of his manners and depravation of his mind made her tell him, when he offered to acknowledge her, that "it was too late." She then gave up herself to sorrowful resentment, and died under the tyranny of him, by whom she was in the highest degree loved and honoured.

What were her claims to this eccentrick tenderness, by which the laws of nature were violated to retain her, curiosity will inquire; but how shall it be gratified? Swift was a lover; his testimony may be suspected. Delany and the Irish saw with Swift's eyes, and, therefore, add little confirmation. That she was virtuous, beautiful, and elegant, in a very high degree, such admiration from such a lover makes it very probable: but she had not much literature, for she could not spell her own language; and of her wit, so loudly vaunted, the smart sayings which Swift himself has collected afford no splendid specimen.

The reader of Swift's Letter to a Lady on her Marriage, may be allowed to doubt whether his opinion of female excellence ought implicitly to be admitted; for, if his general thoughts on women were such as he exhibits, a very little sense in a lady would enrapture, and a very little virtue would as-

tonish him. Stella's supremacy, therefore, was, perhaps, only local; she was great, because her associates were little.

In some remarks lately published on the Life of Swift, this marriage is mentioned as fabulous, or doubtful; but, alas! poor Stella, as Dr. Madden told me, related her melancholy story to Dr. Sheridan, when he attended her as a clergyman to prepare her for death; and Delany mentions it not with doubt, but only with regret. Swift never mentioned her without a sigh. The rest of his life was spent in Ireland, in a country to which not even power almost despotick, nor flattery almost idolatrous, could reconcile him. He sometimes wished to visit England, but always found some reason of delay. He tells Pope, in the decline of life, that he hopes once more to see him; "but if not," says he, "we must part as all human beings have parted."

After the death of Stella, his benevolence was contracted, and his severity exasperated; he drove his acquaintance from his table, and wondered why he was deserted. But he continued his attention to the publick, and wrote, from time to time, such directions, admonitions, or censures, as the exigency of affairs, in his opinion, made proper; and nothing fell from his pen in vain.

In a short poem on the presbyterians, whom he always regarded with detestation, he bestowed one stricture upon Bettesworth, a lawyer eminent for his insolence to the clergy, which, from very considerable reputation, brought him into immediate

and universal contempt. Bettesworth, enraged at his disgrace and loss, went to Swift, and demanded whether he was the author of that poem? "Mr. Bettesworth," answered he, "I was in my youth acquainted with great lawyers, who, knowing my disposition to satire, advised me, that if any scoundrel or blockhead whom I had lampooned should ask, 'Are you the author of this paper?' I should tell him that I was not the author; and, therefore, I tell you, Mr. Bettesworth, that I am not the author of these lines."

Bettesworth was so little satisfied with this account, that he publickly professed his resolution of a violent and corporal revenge; but the inhabitants of St. Patrick's district embodied themselves in the dean's defence. Bettesworth declared in parliament, that Swift had deprived him of twelve hundred pounds a year.

Swift was popular awhile by another mode of beneficence. He set aside some hundreds to be lent in small sums to the poor, from five shillings, I think, to five pounds. He took no interest, and only required that, at repayment, a small fee should be given to the accomptant; but he required that the day of promised payment should be exactly kept. A severe and punctilious temper is ill qualified for transactions with the poor: the day was often broken, and the loan was not repaid. This might have been easily foreseen; but for this Swift had made no provision of patience or pity. He ordered his debtors to be sued. A severe creditor has no

popular character; what then was likely to be said of him who employs the catchpoll under the appearance of charity? The clamour against him was loud, and the resentment of the populace outrageous; he was, therefore, forced to drop his scheme, and own the folly of expecting punctuality from the poor[1].

His asperity continually increasing, condemned him to solitude; and his resentment of solitude sharpened his asperity. He was not, however, totally deserted; some men of learning, and some women of elegance, often visited him; and he wrote, from time to time, either verse or prose; of his verses he willingly gave copies, and is supposed to have felt no discontent when he saw them printed. His favourite maxim was, "Vive la bagatelle;" he thought trifles a necessary part of life, and, perhaps, found them necessary to himself. It seems impossible to him to be idle, and his disorders made it difficult or dangerous to be long seriously studious, or laboriously diligent. The love of ease is always gaining upon age, and he had one temptation to petty amusements peculiar to himself; whatever he did, he was sure to hear applauded; and such was his predominance over all that approached, that all their applauses were probably sincere. He that is much flattered, soon learns to flatter himself: we are commonly taught our duty by fear or shame, and how

[1] This account is contradicted by Mr. Sheridan, who, with great warmth, asserts, from his own knowledge, that there was not one syllable of truth in this whole account from the beginning to the end. See Life of Swift, edit. 1784, p. 532. R.

can they act upon the man who hears nothing but his own praises?

As his years increased, his fits of giddiness and deafness grew more frequent, and his deafness made conversation difficult; they grew likewise more severe, till in 1736, as he was writing a poem called the Legion Club, he was seized with a fit so painful and so long continued, that he never after thought it proper to attempt any work of thought or labour.

He was always careful of his money, and was, therefore, no liberal entertainer; but was less frugal of his wine than of his meat. When his friends of either sex came to him, in expectation of a dinner, his custom was to give every one a shilling, that they might please themselves with their provision. At last his avarice grew too powerful for his kindness; he would refuse a bottle of wine, and in Ireland no man visits where he cannot drink.

Having thus excluded conversation, and desisted from study, he had neither business nor amusement; for, having by some ridiculous resolution, or mad vow, determined never to wear spectacles, he could make little use of books in his later years; his ideas, therefore, being neither renovated by discourse, nor increased by reading, wore gradually away, and left his mind vacant to the vexations of the hour, till, at last, his anger was heightened into madness.

He, however, permitted one book to be published, which had been the production of former years; Polite Conversation, which appeared in 1738. The Directions for Servants was printed soon after his

death. These two performances show a mind incessantly attentive, and, when it was not employed upon great things, busy with minute occurrences. It is apparent, that he must have had the habit of noting whatever he observed; for such a number of particulars could never have been assembled by the power of recollection.

He grew more violent, and his mental powers declined, till, 1741, it was found necessary that legal guardians should be appointed of his person and fortune. He now lost distinction. His madness was compounded of rage and fatuity. The last face that he knew was that of Mrs. Whiteway; and her he ceased to know in a little time. His meat was brought him cut into mouthfuls; but he would never touch it while the servant staid, and, at last, after it had stood perhaps an hour, would eat it walking; for he continued his old habit, and was on his feet ten hours a day.

Next year, 1742, he had an inflammation in his left eye, which swelled it to the size of an egg, with biles in other parts; he was kept long waking with the pain, and was not easily restrained by five attendants from tearing out his eye.

The tumour at last subsided; and a short interval of reason ensuing, in which he knew his physician and his family, gave hopes of his recovery; but in a few days he sunk into a lethargick stupidity, motionless, heedless, and speechless. But it is said, that, after a year of total silence, when his housekeeper, on the 30th of November, told him that

the usual bonfires and illuminations were preparing to celebrate his birthday, he answered, "It is all folly; they had better let it alone."

It is remembered, that he afterwards spoke now and then, or gave some intimation of a meaning; but at last sunk into perfect silence, which continued till about the end of October, 1745, when, in his seventy-eighth year, he expired without a struggle.

When Swift is considered as an author, it is just to estimate his powers by their effects. In the reign of queen Anne he turned the stream of popularity against the whigs, and must be confessed to have dictated, for a time, the political opinions of the English nation. In the succeeding reign he delivered Ireland from plunder and oppression; and showed that wit, confederated with truth, had such force as authority was unable to resist. He said truly of himself, that Ireland "was his debtor." It was from the time when he first began to patronise the Irish, that they may date their riches and prosperity. He taught them first to know their own interest, their weight, and their strength, and gave them spirit to assert that equality with their fellow-subjects to which they have ever since been making vigorous advances, and to claim those rights which they have at last established. Nor can they be charged with ingratitude to their benefactor; for they reverenced him as a guardiam, and obeyed him as a dictator.

In his works he has given very different specimens both of sentiment and expression. His Tale of a Tub

has little resemblance to his other pieces. It exhibits a vehemence and rapidity of mind, a copiousness of images, and vivacity of diction, such as he afterwards never possessed, or never exerted. It is of a mode so distinct and peculiar, that it must be considered by itself; what is true of that, is not true of any thing else which he has written.

In his other works is found an equable tenour of easy language, which rather trickles than flows. His delight was in simplicity. That he has in his works no metaphor, as has been said, is not true; but his few metaphors seem to be received rather by necessity than choice. He studied purity; and though, perhaps, all his strictures are not exact, yet it is not often that solecisms can be found; and whoever depends on his authority may generally conclude himself safe. His sentences are never too much dilated or contracted; and it will not be easy to find any embarrassment in the complication of his clauses, any inconsequence in his connexions, or abruptness in his transitions.

His style was well suited to his thoughts, which are never subtilised by nice disquisitions, decorated by sparkling conceits, elevated by ambitious sentences, or variegated by far-sought learning. He pays no court to the passions; he excites neither surprise nor admiration: he always understands himself; and his reader always understands him: the peruser of Swift wants little previous knowledge; it will be sufficient that he is acquainted with common words and common things; he is neither required to mount

elevations, nor to explore profundities; his passage is always on a level, along solid ground, without asperities, without obstruction.

This easy and safe conveyance of meaning it was Swift's desire to attain, and for having attained he deserves praise, though, perhaps, not the highest praise. For purposes merely didactick, when something is to be told that was not known before, it is the best mode; but against that inattention by which known truths are suffered to lie neglected, it makes no provision; it instructs, but does not persuade.

By his poetical education he was associated with the whigs; but he deserted them when they deserted their principles, yet without running into the contrary extreme; he continued throughout his life to retain the disposition which he assigns to the Church of England Man, of thinking commonly with the whigs of the state, and with the tories of the church.

He was a churchman rationally zealous; he desired the prosperity, and maintained the honour of the clergy; of the dissenters he did not wish to infringe the toleration, but he opposed their encroachments.

To his duty as dean he was very attentive. He managed the revenues of his church with exact economy; and it is said by Delany, that more money was, under his direction, laid out in repairs, than had ever been in the same time since its first erection. Of his choir he was eminently careful; and, though he neither loved nor understood musick, took care that all the singers were well qualified,

admitting none without the testimony of skilful judges.

In his church he restored the practice of weekly communion, and distributed the sacramental elements in the most solemn and devout manner with his own hand. He came to church every morning, preached commonly in his turn, and attended the evening anthem, that it might not be negligently performed.

He read the service, "rather with a strong, nervous voice, than in a graceful manner; his voice was sharp and high-toned, rather than harmonious."

He entered upon the clerical state with hope to excel in preaching; but complained, that, from the time of his political controversies, "he could only preach pamphlets." This censure of himself, if judgment be made from those sermons which have been published, was unreasonably severe.

The suspicions of his irreligion proceeded, in a great measure, from his dread of hypocrisy; instead of wishing to seem better, he delighted in seeming worse than he was. He went in London to early prayers, lest he should be seen at church; he read prayers to his servants every morning with such dexterous secrecy, that Dr. Delany was six months in his house before he knew it. He was not only careful to hide the good which he did, but willingly incurred the suspicion of evil which he did not. He forgot what himself had formerly asserted, that hypocrisy is less mischievous than open impiety. Dr.

Delany, with all his zeal for his honour, has justly condemned this part of his character.

The person of Swift had not many recommendations. He had a kind of muddy complexion, which, though he washed himself with oriental scrupulosity, did not look clear. He had a countenance sour and severe, which he seldom softened by any appearance of gaiety. He stubbornly resisted any tendency to laughter.

To his domesticks he was naturally rough; and a man of a rigorous temper, with that vigilance of minute attention which his works discover, must have been a master that few could bear. That he was disposed to do his servants good, on important occasions, is no great mitigation; benefaction can be but rare, and tyrannick peevishness is perpetual. He did not spare the servants of others. Once, when he dined alone with the earl of Orrery, he said of one that waited in the room, "That man has, since we sat to the table, committed fifteen faults." What the faults were, lord Orrery, from whom I heard the story, had not been attentive enough to discover. My number may, perhaps, not be exact.

In his economy he practised a peculiar and offensive parsimony, without disguise or apology. The practice of saving being once necessary, became habitual, and grew first ridiculous and at last detestable. But his avarice, thought it might exclude pleasure, was never suffered to encroach upon his virtue. He was frugal by inclination, but liberal by principle; and if the purpose to which he destined

his little accumulations be remembered, with his distribution of occasional charity, it will, perhaps, appear, that he only liked one mode of expense better than another, and saved, merely that he might have something to give. He did not grow rich by injuring his successors, but left both Laracor and the deanery more valuable than he found them. With all this talk of his covetousness and generosity, it should be remembered that he was never rich. The revenue of his deanery was not much more than seven hundred a year.

His beneficence was not graced with tenderness or civility; he relieved without pity, and assisted without kindness; so that those who were fed by him could hardly love him.

He made a rule to himself to give but one piece at a time, and, therefore, always stored his pocket with coins of different value.

Whatever he did, he seemed willing to do in a manner peculiar to himself, without sufficiently considering, that singularity, as it implies a contempt of the general practice, is a kind of defiance which justly provokes the hostility of ridicule; he, therefore, who indulges peculiar habits, is worse than others, if he be not better.

Of his humour, a story told by Pope[j] may afford a specimen.

"Dr. Swift has an odd, blunt way, that is mistaken by strangers for illnature. 'Tis so odd, that there's no describing it but by facts. I'll tell you one

[j] Spence.

that first comes into my head. One evening, Gay and I went to see him: you know how intimately we were all acquainted. On our coming in, 'Heyday, gentlemen, (says the Doctor,) what's the meaning of this visit? How came you to leave all the great lords that you are so fond of, to come hither to see a poor dean?' 'Because we would rather see you than any of them.' 'Aye, any one that did not know so well as I do might believe you. But since you are come, I must get some supper for you, I suppose.' 'No, doctor, we have supped already.' 'Supped already? that's impossible! why, 'tis not eight o'clock yet. That's very strange; but if you had not supped, I must have got something for you. Let me see, what should I have had? A couple of lobsters; aye, that would have done very well; two shillings—tarts, a shilling: but you will drink a glass of wine with me, though you supped so much before your usual time only to spare my pocket?' 'No, we had rather talk with you than drink with you.' 'But, if you had supped with me, as in all reason you ought to have done, you must then have drunk with me. A bottle of wine, two shillings—two and two is four, and one is five: just two and sixpence apiece. There, Pope, there's half a crown for you, and there's another for you, sir; for I won't save any thing by you, I am determined.' This was all said and done with his usual seriousness on such occasions; and, in spite of every thing we could say to the contrary, he actually obliged us to take the money."

In the intercourse of familiar life, he indulged his disposition to petulance and sarcasm, and thought himself injured if the licentiousness of his raillery, the freedom of his censures, or the petulance of his frolicks was resented or repressed. He predominated over his companions with very high ascendency, and, probably, would bear none over whom he could not predominate. To give him advice was, in the style of his friend Delany, "to venture to speak to him." This customary superiority soon grew too delicate for truth; and Swift, with all his penetration, allowed himself to be delighted with low flattery.

On all common occasions, he habitually affects a style of arrogance, and dictates rather than persuades. This authoritative and magisterial language he expected to be received as his peculiar mode of jocularity: but he, apparently, flattered his own arrogance by an assumed imperiousness, in which he was ironical only to the resentful, and to the submissive sufficiently serious.

He told stories with great felicity, and delighted in doing what he knew himself to do well; he was, therefore, captivated by the respectful silence of a steady listener, and told the same tales too often.

He did not, however, claim the right of talking alone; for it was his rule, when he had spoken a minute, to give room, by a pause, for any other speaker. Of time, on all occasions, he was an exact computer, and knew the minutes required to every common operation.

It may be justly supposed that there was in his

conversation, what appears so frequently in his letters, an affectation of familiarity with the great, an ambition of momentary equality sought and enjoyed by the neglect of those ceremonies which custom has established as the barriers between one order of society and another. This transgression of regularity was, by himself and his admirers, termed greatness of soul. But a great mind disdains to hold any thing by courtesy, and, therefore, never usurps what a lawful claimant may take away. He that encroaches on another's dignity, puts himself in his power; he is either repelled with helpness indignity, or endured by clemency and condescension.

Of Swift's general habits of thinking, if his letters can be supposed to afford any evidence, he was not a man to be either loved or envied. He seems to have wasted life in discontent, by the rage of neglected pride, and the languishment of unsatisfied desire. He is querulous and fastidious, arrogant and malignant; he scarcely speaks of himself but with indignant lamentations, or of others but with insolent superiority when he is gay, and with angry contempt when he is gloomy. From the letters that pass between him and Pope it might be inferred that they, with Arbuthnot and Gay, had engrossed all the understanding and virtue of mankind; that their merits filled the world; or that there was no hope of more. They show the age involved in darkness, and shade the picture with sullen emulation.

When the queen's death drove him into Ireland, he might be allowed to regret, for a time, the inter-

ception of his views, the extinction of his hopes, and his ejection from gay scenes, important employment, and splendid friendships; but when time had enabled reason to prevail over vexation, the complaints which at first were natural, became ridiculous, because they were useless. But querulousness was now grown habitual, and he cried out when he probably had ceased to feel. His reiterated wailings persuaded Bolingbroke that he was really willing to quit his deanery for an English parish; and Bolingbroke procured an exchange, which was rejected; and Swift still retained the pleasure of complaining.

The greatest difficulty that occurs, in analyzing his character, is to discover by what depravity of intellect he took delight in revolving ideas, from which almost every other mind shrinks with disgust. The ideas of pleasure, even when criminal, may solicit the imagination; but what has disease, deformity, and filth, upon which the thoughts can be allured to dwell? Delany is willing to think that Swift's mind was not much tainted with his gross corruption before his long visit to Pope. He does not consider how he degrades his hero, by making him at fifty-nine the pupil of turpitude, and liable to the malignant influence of an ascendant mind. But the truth is that Gulliver had described his yahoos before the visit; and he that had formed those images had nothing filthy to learn.

I have here given the character of Swift as he exhibits himself to my perception; but now let another be heard who knew him better. Dr. Delany,

after long acquaintance, describes him to lord Orrery in these terms:

"My lord, when you consider Swift's singular, peculiar, and most variegated vein of wit, always intended rightly, although not always so rightly directed; delightful in many instances, and salutary even where it is most offensive: when you consider his strict truth, his fortitude in resisting oppression and arbitrary power; his fidelity in friendship; his sincere love and zeal for religion; his uprightness in making right resolutions, and his steadiness in adhering to them; his care of his church, its choir, its economy, and its income; his attention to all those that preached in his cathedral, in order to their amendment in pronunciation and style; as also his remarkable attention to the interest of his successors, preferably to his own present emoluments; his invincible patriotism, even to a country which he did not love; his very various, well-devised, well-judged, and extensive charities, throughout his life; and his whole fortune (to say nothing of his wife's) conveyed to the same christian purposes at his death; charities, from which he could enjoy no honour, advantage, or satisfaction of any kind in this world; when you consider his ironical and humorous, as well as his serious schemes, for the promotion of true religion and virtue; his success in soliciting for the first fruits and twentieths, to the unspeakable benefit of the established church of Ireland; and his felicity (to rate it no higher) in giving occasion to the building of fifty new churches in London:

"All this considered, the character of his life will appear like that of his writings; they will both bear to be reconsidered and reexamined with the utmost attention, and always discover new beauties and excellencies upon every examination.

"They will bear to be considered as the sun, in which the brightness will hide the blemishes; and whenever petulant ignorance, pride, malice, malignity, or envy, interposes to cloud or sully his fame, I take upon me to pronounce, that the eclipse will not last long.

"To conclude — No man ever deserved better of any country, than Swift did of his; a steady, persevering, inflexible friend; a wise, a watchful, and a faithful counsellor, under many severe trials and bitter persecutions, to the manifest hazard both of his liberty and fortune.

"He lived a blessing, he died a benefactor, and his name will ever live an honour to Ireland."

In the poetical works of Dr. Swift, there is not much upon which the critick can exercise his powers. They are often humorous, almost always light, and have the qualities which recommend such compositions, easiness and gaiety. They are, for the most part, what their author intended. The diction is correct, the numbers are smooth, and the rhymes exact. There seldom occurs a hard-laboured expression, or a redundant epithet; all his verses exemplify his own definition of a good style, they consist of "proper words in proper places."

To divide this collection into classes, and show how some pieces are gross, and some are trifling, would be to tell the reader what he knows already, and to find faults of which the author could not be ignorant, who certainly wrote often not to his judgment, but his humour.

It was said, in a preface to one of the Irish editions, that Swift had never been known to take a single thought from any writer, ancient or modern. This is not literally true; but, perhaps, no writer can easily be found that has borrowed so little, or that, in all his excellencies and all his defects, has so well maintained his claim to be considered as original.

BROOME

WILLIAM BROOME was born in Cheshire, as is said, of very mean parents. Of the place of his birth, or the first part of his life, I have not been able to gain any intelligence. He was educated upon the foundation at Eton, and was captain of the school a whole year, without any vacancy, by which he might have obtained a scholarship at King's college. Being, by this delay, such as is said to have happened very rarely, superannuated, he was sent to St. John's college, by the contributions of his friends, where he obtained a small exhibition.

At his college he lived for some time in the same chamber with the well-known Ford, by whom I have formerly heard him described as a contracted scholar and a mere versifier, unacquainted with life, and unskilful in conversation. His addiction to metre was then such, that his companions familiarly called him poet. When he had opportunities of mingling with mankind, he cleared himself, as Ford likewise owned, from great part of his scholastick rust.

He appeared early in the world as a translator of the Iliads into prose, in conjunction with Ozell and Oldisworth. How their several parts were distributed is not known. This is the translation of which Ozell boasted as superiour, in Toland's opinion, to that of Pope: it has long since vanished, and is now in no danger from the criticks.

He was introduced to Mr. Pope, who was then visiting sir John Cotton, at Madingley, near Cambridge, and gained so much of his esteem, that he

was employed, I believe, to make extracts from Eustathius for the notes to the translation of the Iliad; and, in the volumes of poetry published by Lintot, commonly called Pope's Miscellanies, many of his early pieces were inserted.

Pope and Broome were to be yet more closely connected. When the success of the Iliad gave encouragement to a version of the Odyssey, Pope, weary of the toil, called Fenton and Broome to his assistance; and, taking only half the work upon himself, divided the other half between his partners, giving four books to Fenton, and eight to Broome. Fenton's books I have enumerated in his life; to the lot of Broome fell the second, sixth, eighth, eleventh, twelfth, sixteenth, eighteenth, and twenty-third, together with the burden of writing all the notes.

As this translation is a very important event in poetical history, the reader has a right to know upon what grounds I establish my narration. That the version was not wholly Pope's, was always known: he had mentioned the assistance of two friends in his proposals, and, at the end of the work, some account is given by Broome of their different parts, which, however, mentions only five books as written by the coadjutors; the fourth and twentieth by Fenton; the sixth, the eleventh, and the eighteenth, by himself; though Pope, in an advertisement prefixed afterwards to a new volume of his works, claimed only twelve. A natural curiosity after the real conduct of so great an undertaking, incited me once to

inquire of Dr. Warburton, who told me, in his warm language, that he thought the relation given in the note "a lie;" but that he was not able to ascertain the several shares. The intelligence which Dr. Warburton could not afford me, I obtained from Mr. Langton, to whom Mr. Spence had imparted it.

The price at which Pope purchased this assistance was three hundred pounds paid to Fenton, and five hundred to Broome, with as many copies as he wanted for his friends, which amounted to one hundred more. The payment made to Fenton I know not but by hearsay; Broome's is very distinctly told by Pope, in the notes to the Dunciad.

It is evident, that, according to Pope's own estimate, Broome was unkindly treated. If four books could merit three hundred pounds, eight, and all the notes, equivalent, at least, to four, had certainly a right to more than six.

Broome probably considered himself as injured, and there was, for some time, more than coldness between him and his employer. He always spoke of Pope as too much a lover of money; and Pope pursued him with avowed hostility; for he not only named him disrespectfully in the Dunciad, but quoted him more than once in the Bathos, as a proficient in the Art of Sinking; and in his enumeration of the different kinds of poets distinguished for the profound, he reckons Broome among "the parrots who repeat another's words in such a hoarse odd tone as makes them seem their own." I have been told that they

were afterwards reconciled; but I am afraid their peace was without friendship.

He afterwards published a Miscellany of Poems, which is inserted, with corrections, in the late compilation.

He never rose to a very high dignity in the church. He was some time rector of Sturston, in Suffolk, where he married a wealthy widow; and afterwards, when the king visited Cambridge, 1728, became doctor of laws. He was, in August, 1728, presented by the crown to the rectory of Pulham, in Norfolk, which he held with Oakley Magna, in Suffolk, given him by the lord Cornwallis, to whom he was chaplain, and who added the vicarage of Eye, in Suffolk; he then resigned Pulham, and retained the other two.

Towards the close of his life he grew again poetical, and amused himself with translating Odes of Anacreon, which he published in the Gentleman's Magazine, under the name of Chester.

He died at Bath, November 16, 1745, and was buried in the abbey church.

Of Broome, though it cannot be said that he was a great poet, it would be unjust to deny that he was an excellent versifier; his lines are smooth and sonorous, and his diction is select and elegant. His rhymes are sometimes unsuitable; in his Melancholy, he makes *breath* rhyme to *birth* in one place, and to *earth* in another. Those faults occur but seldom; and he had such power of words and numbers as fitted him for translation; but, in his original works, recollection seems to have been his business more than

invention. His imitations are so apparent, that it is part of his reader's employment to recall the verses of some former poet. Sometimes he copies the most popular writers, for he seems scarcely to endeavour at concealment; and sometimes he picks up fragments in obscure corners. His lines to Fenton,

> Serene, the sting of pain thy thoughts beguile,
> And make afflictions objects of a smile,

brought to my mind some lines on the death of queen Mary, written by Barnes, of whom I should not have expected to find an imitator;

> But thou, O muse! whose sweet nepenthean tongue
> Can charm the pangs of death with deathless song,
> Canst *stinging plagues* with easy *thoughts beguile*,
> *Make* pains and tortures *objects of a smile.*

To detect his imitations were tedious and useless. What he takes he seldom makes worse; and he cannot be justly thought a mean man, whom Pope chose for an associate, and whose cooperation was considered by Pope's enemies as so important, that he was attacked by Henley with this ludicrous distich:

> Pope came off clean with Homer; but they say
> Broome went before, and kindly swept the way.[k]

[k] Henley's joke was borrowed. In a copy of verses, entitled the Time Poets, preserved in a miscellany called Choice Drollery, 1656, are these lines:

> Sent by Ben Jonson, as some authors say,
> Broom went before, and kindly swept the way. J. B.

POPE

ALEXANDER POPE was born in London, May 22, 1688, of parents whose rank or station was never ascertained: we are informed that they were of "gentle blood;" that his father was of a family of which the earl of Downe was the head; and that his mother was the daughter of William Turner, esquire, of York, who had, likewise, three sons, one of whom had the honour of being killed, and the other of dying, in the service of Charles the first; the third was made a general officer in Spain, from whom the sister inherited what sequestrations and forfeitures had left in the family.

This, and this only, is told by Pope; who is more willing, as I have heard observed, to show what his father was not, than what he was. It is allowed that he grew rich by trade; but whether in a shop or on the exchange was never discovered till Mr. Tyers told, on the authority of Mrs. Racket, that he was a linendraper in the Strand. Both parents were papists.

Pope was, from his birth, of a constitution tender and delicate; but is said to have shown remarkable gentleness and sweetness of disposition. The weakness of his body continued through his life[1]; but the mildness of his mind, perhaps, ended with his child-

[1] This weakness was so great that he constantly wore stays, as I have been assured by a waterman at Twickenham, who, in lifting him into his boat, had often felt them. His method of taking the air on the water was to have a sedan chair in the boat, in which he sat with the glasses down. H.

hood[m]. His voice, when he was young, was so pleasing, that he was called, in fondness, "the little nightingale."

Being not sent early to school, he was taught to read by an aunt; and when he was seven or eight years old, became a lover of books. He first learned to write by imitating printed books; a species of penmanship in which he retained great excellence through his whole life, though his ordinary hand was not elegant[n].

When he was about eight, he was placed in Hampshire, under Taverner[o], a Romish priest, who, by a method very rarely practised, taught him the Greek and Latin rudiments together. He was now first regularly initiated in poetry by the perusal of Ogilby's Homer, and Sandys's Ovid. Ogilby's assistance he never repaid with any praise; but of Sandys he declared, in his notes to the Iliad, that English poetry owed much of its present beauty to his translations. Sandys very rarely attempted original composition.

From the care of Taverner, under whom his proficiency was considerable, he was removed to a

[m] This opinion is warmly controverted by Roscoe, in his Life of Pope; and, perhaps, with justice; for, to adopt the words of D'Israeli, "Pope's literary warfare was really the wars of his poetical ambition more, perhaps, than of the petulance and strong irritability of his temper." See also sir Walter Scott's Swift, i. 316. Ed.

[n] This is incorrect; his ordinary hand was certainly neat and elegant. I have some of it now before me. M.

[o] Pope's first instructer is repeatedly mentioned by Spence under the name of Banister, and described as the family priest. Spence's Anecd. 259. 283. Singer's edit. Roscoe's Pope, i. 11. Ed.

school at Twyford, near Winchester, and again to another school about Hydepark Corner; from which he used sometimes to stroll to the playhouse: and was so delighted with theatrical exhibitions, that he formed a kind of play from Ogilby's Iliad, with some verses of his own intermixed, which he persuaded his schoolfellows to act, with the addition of his master's gardener, who personated Ajax.

At the two last schools he used to represent himself as having lost part of what Taverner had taught him; and on his master at Twyford he had already exercised his poetry in a lampoon. Yet under those masters he translated more than a fourth part of the Metamorphoses. If he kept the same proportion in his other exercises, it cannot be thought that his loss was great.

He tells of himself, in his poems, that, "he lisp'd in numbers;" and used to say that he could not remember the time when he began to make verses. In the style of fiction it might have been said of him as of Pindar, that when he lay in his cradle, "the bees swarmed about his mouth."

About the time of the revolution, his father, who was undoubtedly disappointed by the sudden blast of Popish prosperity, quitted his trade, and retired to Binfield, in Windsor forest, with about twenty thousand pounds; for which, being conscientiously determined not to entrust it to the government, he found no better use than that of locking it up in a chest, and taking from it what his expenses required;

and his life was long enough to consume a great part of it, before his son came to the inheritance.

To Binfield Pope was called by his father, when he was about twelve years old; and there he had, for a few months, the assistance of one Deane, another priest, of whom he learned only to construe a little of Tully's Offices. How Mr. Deane could spend, with a boy who had translated so much of Ovid, some months over a small part of Tully's Offices, it is now vain to inquire.

Of a youth so successfully employed, and so conspicuously improved, a minute account must be naturally desired: but curiosity must be contented with confused, imperfect, and, sometimes, improbable intelligence. Pope, finding little advantage from external help, resolved, thenceforward, to direct himself, and at twelve formed a plan of study, which he completed with little other incitement than the desire of excellence.

His primary and principal purpose was to be a poet, with which his father accidentally concurred, by proposing subjects, and obliging him to correct his performances by many revisals; after which the old gentleman, when he was satisfied, would say, "these are good rhymes."

In his perusal of the English poets he soon distinguished the versification of Dryden, which he considered as the model to be studied, and was impressed with such veneration for his instructer, that he persuaded some friends to take him to the coffee-

house which Dryden frequented, and pleased himself with having seen him.

Dryden died May 1, 1701, some days before Pope was twelve[p]; so early must he, therefore, have felt the power of harmony, and the zeal of genius. Who does not wish that Dryden could have known the value of the homage that was paid him, and foreseen the greatness of his young admirer?

The earliest of Pope's productions is his Ode on Solitude, written before he was twelve, in which there is nothing more than other forward boys have attained, and which is not equal to Cowley's performances at the same age.

His time was now wholly spent in reading and writing. As he read the classicks, he amused himself with translating them; and, at fourteen, made a version of the first book of the Thebais, which, with some revision, he afterwards published. He must have been, at this time, if he had no help, a considerable proficient in the Latin tongue.

By Dryden's Fables, which had then been not long published, and were much in the hands of poetical readers, he was tempted to try his own skill in giving Chaucer a more fashionable appearance, and put January and May, and the Prologue of the Wife of Bath, into modern English. He translated, likewise, the epistle of Sappho to Phaon, from Ovid, to complete the version which was before imperfect; and wrote some other small pieces, which he afterwards printed.

[p] Dryden died May 1, 1700, a year earlier than Johnson supposed. M.

He sometimes imitated the English poets, and professed to have written at fourteen, his poem upon Silence, after Rochester's Nothing. He had now formed his versification, and in the smoothness of his numbers surpassed the original: but this is a small part of his praise; he discovers such acquaintance both with human life and publick affairs, as is not easily conceived to have been attainable by a boy of fourteen in Windsor forest.

Next year he was desirous of opening to himself new sources of knowledge, by making himself acquainted with modern languages; and removed, for a time, to London, that he might study French and Italian, which, as he desired nothing more than to read them, were, by diligent application, soon despatched. Of Italian learning he does not appear to have ever made much use in his subsequent studies.

He then returned to Binfield, and delighted himself with his own poetry. He tried all styles, and many subjects. He wrote a comedy, a tragedy, an epick poem, with panegyricks on all the princes of Europe; and, as he confesses, "thought himself the greatest genius that ever was." Self-confidence is the first requisite to great undertakings. He, indeed, who forms his opinion of himself in solitude, without knowing the powers of other men, is very liable to errour; but it was the felicity of Pope to rate himself at his real value.

Most of his puerile productions were, by his maturer judgment, afterwards destroyed; Alcander, the epick poem, was burnt by the persuasion of

Atterbury. The tragedy was founded on the legend of St. Genevieve. Of the comedy there is no account.

Concerning his studies it is related, that he translated Tully on Old Age; and that, besides his books of poetry and criticism, he read Temple's Essays and Locke on Human Understanding. His reading, though his favourite authors are not known, appears to have been sufficiently extensive and multifarious; for his early pieces show, with sufficient evidence, his knowledge of books.

He that is pleased with himself easily imagines that he shall please others. Sir William Trumbull, who had been ambassador at Constantinople, and secretary of state, when he retired from business, fixed his residence in the neighbourhood of Binfield. Pope, not yet sixteen, was introduced to the statesman of sixty, and so distinguished himself, that their interviews ended in friendship and correspondence. Pope was, through his whole life, ambitious of splendid acquaintance; and he seems to have wanted neither diligence nor success in attracting the notice of the great; for, from his first entrance into the world, and his entrance was very early, he was admitted to familiarity with those whose rank or station made them most conspicuous.

From the age of sixteen the life of Pope, as an author, may be properly computed. He now wrote his Pastorals, which were shown to the poets and criticks of that time; as they well deserved, they were read with admiration, and many praises were bestowed upon them and upon the preface, which is

both elegant and learned in a high degree: they were, however, not published till five years afterwards.

Cowley, Milton, and Pope, are distinguished among the English poets by the early exertion of their powers; but the works of Cowley alone were published in his childhood, and, therefore, of him only can it be certain that his puerile performances received no improvement from his maturer studies

At this time began his acquaintance with Wycherley, a man who seems to have had among his contemporaries his full share of reputation, to have been esteemed without virtue, and caressed without good-humour. Pope was proud of his notice; Wycherley wrote verses in his praise, which he was charged by Dennis with writing to himself, and they agreed for a while to flatter one another. It is pleasant to remark how soon Pope learned the cant of an author, and began to treat criticks with contempt, though he had yet suffered nothing from them.

But the fondness of Wycherley was too violent to last. His esteem of Pope was such, that he submitted some poems to his revision; and when Pope, perhaps proud of such confidence, was sufficiently bold in his criticisms, and liberal in his alterations, the old scribbler was angry to see his pages defaced, and felt more pain from the detection than content from the amendment of his faults. They parted; but Pope always considered him with kindness, and visited him a little time before he died.

Another of his early correspondents was Mr. Cromwell, of whom I have learned nothing particu-

lar, but that he used to ride a hunting in a tie-wig. He was fond, and perhaps vain, of amusing himself with poetry and criticism; and sometimes sent his performances to Pope, who did not forbear such remarks as were now and then unwelcome. Pope, in his turn, put the juvenile version of Statius into his hands for correction.

Their correspondence afforded the publick its first knowledge of Pope's epistolary powers; for his letters were given by Cromwell to one Mrs. Thomas; and she, many years afterwards, sold them to Curli, who inserted them in a volume of his miscellanies.

Walsh, a name yet preserved among the minor poets, was one of his first encouragers. His regard was gained by the Pastorals, and from him Pope received the counsel by which he seems to have regulated his studies. Walsh advised him to correctness, which, as he told him, the English poets had hitherto neglected, and which, therefore, was left to him as a basis of fame; and being delighted with rural poems, recommended to him to write a pastoral comedy, like those which are read so eagerly in Italy; a design which Pope probably did not approve, as he did not follow it.

Pope had now declared himself a poet; and thinking himself entitled to poetical conversation, began, at seventeen, to frequent Will's, a coffee-house on the north side of Russel-street in Covent-garden, where the wits of that time used to assemble, and where Dryden had, when he lived, been accustomed to preside.

During this period of his life, he was indefatigably diligent, and insatiably curious; wanting health for violent, and money for expensive pleasures, and having excited in himself very strong desires of intellectual eminence, he spent much of his time over his books; but he read only to store his mind with facts and images, seizing all that his authors presented with undistinguishing voracity, and with an appetite for knowledge too eager to be nice. In a mind like his, however, all the faculties were at once involuntarily improving. Judgment is forced upon us by experience. He that reads many books must compare one opinion or one style with another; and, when he compares, must necessarily distinguish, reject, and prefer. But the account given by himself of his studies was, that from fourteen to twenty he read only for amusement, from twenty to twenty-seven for improvement and instruction; that in the first part of this time he desired only to know, and in the second he endeavoured to judge.

The pastorals, which had been, for some time, handed about among poets and criticks, were at last printed, 1709, in Tonson's Miscellany, in a volume which began with the Pastorals of Philips, and ended with those of Pope.

The same year was written the Essay on Criticism; a work which displays such extent of comprehension, such nicety of distinction, such acquaintance with mankind, and such knowledge both of ancient and modern learning, as are not often attained by the maturest age and longest experience. It was pub-

lished about two years afterwards; and, being praised by Addison in the Spectator[q] with sufficient liberality, met with so much favour as enraged Dennis, "who," he says, "found himself attacked, without any manner of provocation on his side, and attacked in his person, instead of his writings, by one who was wholly a stranger to him, at a time when all the world knew he was persecuted by fortune; and not only saw that this was attempted in a clandestine manner, with the utmost falsehood and calumny, but found that all this was done by a little affected hypocrite, who had nothing in his mouth at the same time but truth, candour, friendship, good-nature, humanity, and magnanimity."

How the attack was clandestine is not easily perceived, nor how his person is depreciated; but he seems to have known something of Pope's character, in whom may be discovered an appetite to talk too frequently of his own virtues.

The pamphlet is such as rage might be expected to dictate. He supposes himself to be asked two questions; whether the essay will succeed, and who or what is the author.

Its success he admits to be secured by the false opinions then prevalent: the author he concludes to be "young and raw."

"First, because he discovers a sufficiency beyond his little ability, and hath rashly undertaken a task

[q] No. 253. But, according to Dr. Warton, Pope was displeased at one passage, in which Addison censures the admission of "some strokes of ill-nature."

infinitely above his force. Secondly, while this little author struts, and affects the dictatorian air, he plainly shows, that at the same time he is under the rod; and, while he pretends to give laws to others, is a pedantick slave to authority and opinion. Thirdly, he hath, like schoolboys, borrowed both from living and dead. Fourthly, he knows not his own mind, and frequently contradicts himself. Fifthly, he is almost perpetually in the wrong.''

All these positions he attempts to prove by quotations and remarks; but his desire to do mischief is greater than his power. He has, however, justly criticised some passages: in these lines,

> There are whom heav'n has class'd with store of wit,
> Yet want as much again to manage it;
> For wit and judgment ever are at strife—

it is apparent, that *wit* has two meanings; and that what is wanted, though called *wit*, is, truly, judgment. So far Dennis is undoubtedly right; but, not content with argument, he will have a little mirth, and triumphs over the first couplet in terms too elegant to be forgotten. ''By the way, what rare numbers are here! Would not one swear that this youngster had espoused some antiquated muse, who had sued out a divorce on account of impotence from some superannuated sinner; and, having been p—xed by her former spouse, has got the gout, in her decrepit age, which makes her hobble so damnably?'' This was the man who would reform a nation sinking into barbarity.

In another place Pope himself allowed, that Den-

nis had detected one of those blunders, which are called "bulls." The first edition had this line:

> What is this wit—
> Where wanted, scorn'd; and envied, where acquir'd?

"How," says the critick, "can wit be scorn'd where it is not? Is not this a figure frequently employed in Hibernian land? The person that wants this wit may, indeed, be scorned, but the scorn shows the honour which the contemner has for wit." Of this remark Pope made the proper use, by correcting the passage.

I have preserved, I think, all that is reasonable in Dennis's criticism; it remains, that justice be done to his delicacy. "For his acquaintance," says Dennis, "he names Mr. Walsh, who had by no means the qualification which this author reckons absolutely necessary to a critick, it being very certain that he was, like this essayer, a very indifferent poet; he loved to be well dressed; and I remember a little young gentleman, whom Mr. Walsh used to take into his company, as a double foil to his person and capacity. Inquire, between Sunninghill and Oakingham, for a young, short, squab gentleman, the very bow of the god of love, and tell me, whether he be a proper author to make personal reflections? He may extol the ancients, but he has reason to thank the gods that he was born a modern; for had he been born of Grecian parents, and his father, consequently, had, by law, had the absolute disposal of him, his life had been no longer than that of one of his poems, the life of half a day. Let the person of

a gentleman of his parts be never so contemptible, his inward man is ten times more ridiculous; it being impossible that his outward form, though it be that of a downright monkey, should differ so much from human shape, as his unthinking, immaterial part does from human understanding.'' Thus began the hostility between Pope and Dennis, which, though it was suspended for a short time, never was appeased. Pope seems, at first, to have attacked him wantonly; but, though he always professed to despise him, he discovers, by mentioning him very often, that he felt his force or his venom.

Of this essay Pope declared, that he hid not expect the sale to be quick, because "not one gentleman in sixty, even of liberal education, could understand it.'' The gentlemen, and the education of that time, seem to have been of a lower character than they are of this. He mentioned a thousand copies as a numerous impression.

Dennis was not his only censurer: the zealous papists thought the monks treated with too much contempt, and Erasmus too studiously praised; but to these objections he had not much regard.

The essay has been translated into French by Hamilton, author of the Comte de Grammont, whose version was never printed, by Robotham, secretary to the king for Hanover, and by Resnel; and commented by Dr. Warburton, who has discovered in it such order and connexion as was not perceived by Addison, nor, as is said, intended by the author.

Almost every poem, consisting of precepts, is so far arbitrary and immethodical, that many of the paragraphs may change places with no apparent inconvenience: for of two or more positions, depending upon some remote and general principle, there is seldom any cogent reason why one should precede the other. But for the order in which they stand, whatever it be, a little ingenuity may easily give a reason. "It is possible," says Hooker, "that, by long circumduction, from any one truth all truth may be inferred." Of all homogeneous truths, at least of all truths respecting the same general end, in whatever series they may be produced, a concatenation by intermediate ideas may be formed, such as, when it is once shown, shall appear natural; but if this order be reversed, another mode of connexion equally specious may be found or made. Aristotle is praised for naming fortitude first of the cardinal virtues, as that without which no other virtue can steadily be practised; but he might, with equal propriety, have placed prudence and justice before it; since without prudence, fortitude is mad; without justice, it is mischievous.

As the end of method is perspicuity, that series is sufficiently regular that avoids obscurity; and where there is no obscurity, it will not be difficult to discover method.

In the Spectator was published the Messiah, which he first submitted to the perusal of Steele, and corrected in compliance with his criticisms.

It is reasonable to infer, from his letters, that the

verses on the Unfortunate Lady were written about the time when his Essay was published. The lady's name and adventures I have sought with fruitless inquiry.

I can, therefore, tell no more than I have learned from Mr. Ruffhead, who writes with the confidence of one who could trust his information. She was a woman of eminent rank and large fortune, the ward of an uncle, who, having given her a proper education, expected, like other guardians, that she should make, at least, an equal match; and such he proposed to her, but found it rejected in favour of a young gentleman of inferiour condition.

Having discovered the correspondence between the two lovers, and finding the young lady determined to abide by her own choice, he supposed that separation might do what can rarely be done by arguments, and sent her into a foreign country, where she was obliged to converse only with those from whom her uncle had nothing to fear.

Her lover took care to repeat his vows; but his letters were intercepted and carried to her guardian, who directed her to be watched with still greater vigilance, till of this restraint she grew so impatient, that she bribed a woman servant to procure her a sword, which she directed to her heart.

From this account, given with evident intention to raise the lady's character, it does not appear that she had any claim to praise, nor much to compas-

[r] See Gent. Mag. vol. li. p. 314. N. See the subject very fully discussed in Roscoe's Life of Pope, i. 86, and following pages.

sion. She seems to have been impatient, violent, and ungovernable. Her uncle's power could not have lasted long; the hour of liberty and choice would have come in time. But her desires were too hot for delay, and she liked self-murder better than suspense.

Nor is it discovered that the uncle, whoever he was, is with much justice delivered to posterity as "a false guardian;" he seems to have done only that for which a guardian is appointed: he endeavoured to direct his niece till she should be able to direct herself. Poetry has not often been worse employed than in dignifying the amorous fury of a raving girl.

Not long after, he wrote the Rape of the Lock, the most airy, the most ingenious, and the most delightful of all his compositions, occasioned by a frolick of gallantry, rather too familiar, in which lord Petre cut off a lock of Mrs. Arabella Fermor's hair. This, whether stealth or violence, was so much resented, that the commerce of the two families, before very friendly, was interrupted. Mr. Caryl, a gentleman who, being secretary to king James's queen, had followed his mistress into France, and who, being the author of Sir Solomon Single, a comedy, and some translations, was entitled to the notice of a wit, solicited Pope to endeavour a reconciliation by a ludicrous poem, which might bring both the parties to a better temper. In compliance with Caryl's request, though his name was for a long time marked only by the first and last letters,

C—l, a poem of two cantos was written, 1711, as is said, in a fortnight, and sent to the offended lady, who liked it well enough to show it; and, with the usual process of literary transactions, the author, dreading a surreptitious edition, was forced to publish it.

The event is said to have been such as was desired, the pacification and diversion of all to whom it related, except sir George Brown, who complained, with some bitterness, that, in the character of sir Plume, he was made to talk nonsense. Whether all this be true I have some doubt; for at Paris, a few years ago, a niece of Mrs. Fermor, who presided in an English convent, mentioned Pope's work with very little gratitude, rather as an insult than an honour; and she may be supposed to have inherited the opinion of her family.

At its first appearance it was termed, by Addison, "merum sal." Pope, however, saw that it was capable of improvement; and, having luckily contrived to borrow his machinery from the Rosicrucians, imparted the scheme with which his head was teeming to Addison, who told him that his work, as it stood, was "a delicious little thing," and gave him no encouragement to retouch it.

This has been too hastily considered as an instance of Addison's jealousy; for, as he could not guess the conduct of the new design, or the possibilities of pleasure comprised in a fiction, of which there had been no examples, he might very reasonably and kindly persuade the author to acquiesce in his

own prosperity, and forbear an attempt which he considered as an unnecessary hazard.

Addison's counsel was happily rejected. Pope foresaw the future efflorescence of imagery then budding in his mind, and resolved to spare no art, or industry of cultivation. The soft luxuriance of his fancy was already shooting, and all the gay varieties of diction were ready at his hand to colour and embellish it.

His attempt was justified by its success. The Rape of the Lock stands forward, in the classes of literature, as the most exquisite example of ludicrous poetry. Berkeley congratulated him upon the display of powers more truly poetical than he had shown before; with elegance of description and justness of precepts, he had now exhibited boundless fertility of invention.

He always considered the intermixture of the machinery with the action as his most successful exertion of poetical art. He, indeed, could never afterwards produce any thing of such unexampled excellence. Those performances, which strike with wonder, are combinations of skilful genius with happy casualty; and it is not likely that any felicity, like the discovery of a new race of preternatural agents, should happen twice to the same man.

Of this poem, the author was, I think, allowed to enjoy the praise for a long time without disturbance. Many years afterwards Dennis published some remarks upon it, with very little force, and with no effect; for the opinion of the publick was already

settled, and it was no longer at the mercy of criticism.

About this time he published the Temple of Fame, which, as he tells Steele in their correspondence, he had written two years before; that is, when he was only twenty-two years old, an early time of life for so much learning and so much observation as that work exhibits.

On this poem Dennis afterwards published some remarks, of which the most reasonable is, that some of the lines represent motion, as exhibited by sculpture[s].

Of the epistle from Eloisa to Abelard, I do not know the date. His first inclination to attempt a composition of that tender kind arose, as Mr. Savage told me, from his perusal of Prior's Nutbrown Maid. How much he has surpassed Prior's work it is not necessary to mention, when, perhaps, it may be said with justice, that he has excelled every composition of the same kind. The mixture of religious hope and resignation gives an elevation and dignity to disappointed love, which images merely natural cannot bestow. The gloom of a convent strikes the imagination with far greater force than the solitude of a grove.

[s] What eye of taste ever beheld the dancing fawn of the immortal Canova's dancing girl, and doubted of this power? Pindar long ago assigned this to sculpture, and was never censured for his poetic boldness:

> [v] *Εργα δὲ ζωοῖσιν ἑρπόν-*
> *τεσσί θ' ὁμοῖα κέλενθοι*
> *Φέρον.* Olym. vii. 95. Ed.

This piece was, however, not much his favourite in his latter years, though I never heard upon what principle he slighted it[t].

In the next year, 1713, he published Windsor Forest; of which, part was, as he relates, written at sixteen, about the same time as his pastorals; and the latter part was added afterwards: where the addition begins, we are not told. The lines relating to the peace confess their own date. It is dedicated to lord Lansdowne, who was then high in reputation and influence among the tories; and it is said, that the conclusion of the poem gave great pain to Addison, both as a poet and a politician. Reports like this are often spread with boldness very disproportionate to their evidence. Why should Addison receive any particular disturbance from the last lines of Windsor Forest? If contrariety of opinion could poison a politician, he would not live a day: and, as a poet, he must have felt Pope's force of genius much more from many other parts of his works.

The pain that Addison might feel it is not likely that he would confess; and it is certain that he so well suppressed his discontent, that Pope now thought himself his favourite; for having been consulted in the revisal of Cato, he introduced it by a prologue; and when Dennis published his remarks, undertook, not indeed to vindicate, but to revenge

[t] Pope never felt with Eloisa, and, therefore, slighted his own affected effusions. He had little intense feeling himself, and all the passionate parts of the epistle are manifestly borrowed from Eloisa's own Latin letters. Ed.

his friend, by a Narrative of the Frensy of John Dennis.

There is reason to believe that Addison gave no encouragement to this disingenuous hostility; for, says Pope, in a letter to him, "indeed your opinion, that 'tis entirely to be neglected, would be my own in my own case; but I felt more warmth here than I did when I first saw his book against myself, (though indeed in two minutes it made me heartily merry".) Addison was not a man on whom such cant of sensibility could make much impression. He left the pamphlet to itself, having disowned it to Dennis, and, perhaps, did not think Pope to have deserved much by his officiousness.

This year was printed in the Guardian the ironical comparison between the Pastorals of Philips and Pope; a composition of artifice, criticism, and literature, to which nothing equal will easily be found. The superiority of Pope is so ingeniously dissembled, and the feeble lines of Philips so skilfully preferred, that Steele, being deceived, was unwilling to print the paper, lest Pope should be offended. Addison immediately saw the writer's design; and, as it seems, had malice enough to conceal his discovery, and to permit a publication which, by making his friend Philips ridiculous, made him for ever an enemy to Pope.

It appears that about this time Pope had a strong inclination to unite the art of painting with that of poetry, and put himself under the tuition of Jervas. He was near-sighted, and, therefore, not formed by

nature for a painter: he tried, however, how far he could advance, and sometimes persuaded his friends to sit. A picture of Betterton, supposed to be drawn by him, was in the possession of lord Mansfield[u]: if this was taken from the life, he must have begun to paint earlier; for Betterton was now dead. Pope's ambition of this new art produced some encomiastick verses to Jervas, which certainly show his power as a poet; but I have been told that they betray his ignorance of painting.

He appears to have regarded Betterton with kindness and esteem; and after his death published, under his name, a version into modern English of Chaucer's prologues, and one of his tales, which, as was related by Mr. Harte, were believed to have been the performance of Pope himself by Fenton, who made him a gay offer of five pounds, if he would show them in the hand of Betterton.

The next year, 1713, produced a bolder attempt, by which profit was sought as well as praise. The poems which he had hitherto written, however they might have diffused his name, had made very little addition to his fortune. The allowance which his father made him, though, proportioned to what he had, it might be liberal, could not be large; his religion hindered him from the occupation of any civil employment; and he complained that he wanted even money to buy books[v].

He, therefore, resolved to try how far the favour

[u] It is still at Caen Wood. N.

[v] Spence.

of the publick extended, by soliciting a subscription to a version of the Iliad, with large notes.

To print by subscription was, for some time, a practice peculiar to the English. The first considerable work, for which this expedient was employed, is said to have been Dryden's Virgil[w]; and it had been tried again with great success when the Tatlers were collected into volumes.

There was reason to believe that Pope's attempt would be successful. He was in the full bloom of reputation, and was personally known to almost all whom dignity of employment or splendour of reputation had made eminent; he conversed indifferently with both parties, and never disturbed the publick with his political opinions; and it might be naturally expected, as each faction then boasted its literary zeal, that the great men, who on other occasions practised all the violence of opposition, would emulate each other in their encouragement of a poet who had delighted all, and by whom none had been offended.

With those hopes, he offered an English Iliad to subscribers, in six volumes in quarto, for six guineas; a sum, according to the value of money at that time, by no means inconsiderable, and greater than I believe to have been ever asked before. His proposal, however, was very favourably received; and the patrons of literature were busy to recommend his undertaking, and promote his interest. Lord Oxford,

[w] Earlier than this, viz. in 1688, Milton's Paradise Lost had been published with great success by subscription, in folio, under the patronage of Mr. (afterwards lord) Somers. R.

indeed, lamented that such a genius should be wasted upon a work not original; but proposed no means by which he might live without it. Addison recommended caution and moderation, and advised him not to be content with the praise of half the nation, when he might be universally favoured.

The greatness of the design, the popularity of the author, and the attention of the literary world, naturally raised such expectations of the future sale, that the booksellers made their offers with great eagerness; but the highest bidder was Bernard Lintot, who became proprietor on condition of supplying, at his own expense, all the copies which were to be delivered to subscribers, or presented to friends, and paying two hundred pounds for every volume.

Of the quartos it was, I believe, stipulated that none should be printed but for the author, that the subscription might not be depreciated; but Lintot impressed the same pages upon a small folio, and paper, perhaps, a little thinner; and sold exactly at half the price, for half-a-guinea each volume, books so little inferiour to the quartos, that by a fraud of trade, those folios, being afterwards shortened by cutting away the top and bottom, were sold as copies printed for the subscribers.

Lintot printed two hundred and fifty on royal paper in folio, for two guineas a volume; of the small folio, having printed seventeen hundred and fifty copies of the first volume, he reduced the number in the other volumes to a thousand.

It is unpleasant to relate that the bookseller, after all his hopes and all his liberality, was, by a very unjust and illegal action, defrauded of his profit[x]. An edition of the English Iliad was printed in Holland in duodecimo, and imported clandestinely for the gratification of those who were impatient to read what they could not yet afford to buy. This fraud could only be counteracted by an edition equally cheap and more commodious; and Lintot was compelled to contract his folio at once into a duodecimo, and lose the advantage of an intermediate gradation. The notes, which in the Dutch copies were placed at the end of each book, as they had been in the large volumes, were now subjoined to the text in the same page, and are, therefore, more easily consulted. Of this edition two thousand five hundred were first printed, and five thousand a few weeks afterwards; but, indeed, great numbers were necessary to produce considerable profit.

Pope, having now emitted his proposals, and engaged not only his own reputation, but, in some degree, that of his friends who patronized his subscription, began to be frighted at his own undertaking; and finding himself at first embarrassed with difficulties, which retarded and oppressed him, he was for a time timorous and uneasy, had his nights disturbed by dreams of long journeys through un-

[x] This may very well be doubted. The interference of the Dutch booksellers stimulated Lintot to publish cheap editions, the greater sale of which among the people probably produced his large profits. Ed.

known ways, and wished, as he said, "that somebody would hang him[y]."

This misery, however, was not of long continuance; he grew, by degrees, more acquainted with Homer's images and expressions, and practice increased his facility of versification. In a short time he represents himself as despatching regularly fifty verses a day, which would show him, by an easy computation, the termination of his labour.

His own diffidence was not his only vexation. He that asks a subscription soon finds that he has enemies. All who do not encourage him, defame him. He that wants money will rather be thought angry than poor; and he that wishes to save his money conceals his avarice by his malice. Addison had hinted his suspicion that Pope was too much a tory; and some of the tories suspected his principles, because he had contributed to the Guardian, which was carried on by Steele.

To those who censured his politicks were added enemies yet more dangerous, who called in question his knowledge of Greek, and his qualifications for a translator of Homer. To these he made no publick opposition; but in one of his letters escapes from them as well as he can. At an age like his, for he was not more than twenty-five, with an irregular education, and a course of life of which much seems to have passed in conversation, it is not very likely that he overflowed with Greek. But when he felt himself deficient he sought assistance; and what

[y] Spence.

man of learning would refuse to help him? Minute inquiries into the force of words are less necessary in translating Homer than other poets, because his positions are general, and his representations natural, with very little dependence on local or temporary customs, or those changeable scenes of artificial life, which, by mingling original with accidental notions, and crowding the mind with images which time effaces, produce ambiguity in diction, and obscurity in books. To this open display of unadulterated nature it must be ascribed, that Homer has fewer passages of doubtful meaning than any other poet either in the learned or in modern languages. I have read of a man, who being, by his ignorance of Greek, compelled to gratify his curiosity with the Latin printed on the opposite page, declared that from the rude simplicity of the lines literally rendered, he formed nobler ideas of the Homeric majesty, than from the laboured elegance of polished versions.

Those literal translations were always at hand, and from them he could easily obtain his author's sense with sufficient certainty; and among the readers of Homer the number is very small of those who find much in the Greek more than in the Latin, except the musick of the numbers.

If more help was wanting, he had the poetical translation of Eobanus Hessus, an unwearied writer of Latin verses; he had the French Homers of la Valterie and Dacier, and the English of Chapman, Hobbes, and Ogilby. With Chapman, whose work, though now totally neglected, seems to have been

popular almost to the end of the last century, he had very frequent consultations, and, perhaps, never translated any passage till he had read his version, which, indeed, he has been sometimes suspected of using instead of the original.

Notes were likewise to be provided; for the six volumes would have been very little more than six pamphlets without them. What the mere perusal of the text could suggest, Pope wanted no assistance to collect or methodise; but more was necessary; many pages were to be filled, and learning must supply materials to wit and judgment. Something might be gathered from Dacier; but no man loves to be indebted to his contemporaries, and Dacier was accessible to common readers. Eustathius was, therefore, necessarily consulted. To read Eustathius, of whose work there was then no Latin version, I suspect Pope, if he had been willing, not to have been able; some other was, therefore, to be found, who had leisure as well as abilities; and he was doubtless most readily employed who would do much work for little money.

The history of the notes has never been traced. Broome, in his preface to his poems, declares himself the commentator "in part upon the Iliad;" and it appears from Fenton's letter, preserved in the Museum, that Broome was at first engaged in consulting Eustathius; but that after a time, whatever was the reason, he desisted: another man, of Cambridge, was then employed, who soon grew weary of the work; and a third, that was recommended by

Thirlby, is now discovered to have been Jortin, a man since well known to the learned world, who complained that Pope, having accepted and approved his performance, never testified any curiosity to see him, and who professed to have forgotten the terms on which he worked. The terms which Fenton uses are very mercantile: "I think, at first sight, that his performance is very commendable, and have sent word for him to finish the seventeenth book, and to send it with his demands for his trouble. I have here enclosed the specimen; if the rest come before the return, I will keep them till I receive your order."

Broome then offered his service a second time, which was, probably, accepted, as they had afterwards a closer correspondence. Parnell contributed the Life of Homer, which Pope found so harsh, that he took great pains in correcting it; and by his own diligence, with such help as kindness or money could procure him, in somewhat more than five years he completed his version of the Iliad, with the notes. He began it in 1712, his twenty-fifth year; and concluded it in 1718, his thirtieth year.

When we find him translating fifty lines a day, it is natural to suppose that he would have brought his work to a more speedy conclusion. The Iliad, containing less than sixteen thousand verses, might have been despatched in less than three hundred and twenty days by fifty verses in a day. The notes, compiled with the assistance of his mercenaries, could not be supposed to require more time than the text.

According to this calculation, the progress of Pope may seem to have been slow; but the distance is commonly very great between actual performances and speculative possibility. It is natural to suppose, that as much as has been done to-day, may be done to-morrow; but on the morrow some difficulty emerges, or some external impediment obstructs. Indolence, interruption, business, and pleasure, all take their turns of retardation; and every long work is lengthened by a thousand causes that can, and ten thousand that cannot be recounted. Perhaps no extensive and multifarious performance was ever effected within the term originally fixed in the undertaker's mind. He that runs against time has an antagonist not subject to casualties.

The encouragement given to this translation, though report seems to have overrated it, was such as the world has not often seen. The subscribers were five hundred and seventy-five. The copies, for which subscriptions were given, were six hundred and fifty-four; and only six hundred and sixty were printed. For these copies Pope had nothing to pay; he, therefore, received, including the two hundred pounds a volume, five thousand three hundred and twenty pounds four shillings without deduction, as the books were supplied by Lintot.

By the success of his subscription Pope was relieved from those pecuniary distresses with which, notwithstanding his popularity, he had hitherto struggled. Lord Oxford had often lamented his disqualification for publick employment, but never

proposed a pension. While the translation of Homer was in its progress, Mr. Craggs, then secretary of state, offered to procure him a pension, which, at least during his ministry, might be enjoyed with secrecy. This was not accepted by Pope, who told him, however, that, if he should be pressed with want of money, he would send to him for occasional supplies. Craggs was not long in power, and was never solicited for money by Pope, who disdained to beg what he did not want.

With the product of this subscription, which he had too much discretion to squander, he secured his future life from want, by considerable annuities. The estate of the duke of Buckingham was found to have been charged with five hundred pounds a year, payable to Pope, which, doubtless, his translation enabled him to purchase.

It cannot be unwelcome to literary curiosity, that I deduce thus minutely the history of the English Iliad. It is, certainly, the noblest version of poetry which the world has ever seen; and its publication must, therefore, be considered as one of the great events in the annals of learning.

To those who have skill to estimate the excellence and difficulty of this great work, it must be very desirable to know how it was performed, and by what gradations it advanced to correctness. Of such an intellectual process the knowledge has very rarely been attainable; but, happily, there remains the original copy of the Iliad, which, being obtained by Bolingbroke, as a curiosity, descended, from him, to

Mallet, and is now, by the solicitation of the late Dr. Maty, reposited in the Museum.

Between this manuscript, which is written upon accidental fragments of paper, and the printed edition, there must have been an intermediate copy, that was, perhaps, destroyed as it returned from the press.

From the first copy I have procured a few transcripts, and shall exhibit, first, the printed lines: then, in a smaller print, those of the manuscripts, with all their variations. Those words in the small print, which are given in italicks, are cancelled in the copy, and the words placed under them adopted in their stead.

The beginning of the first book stands thus;

The wrath of Peleus' son, the direful spring
Of all the Grecian woes, O goddess, sing;
That wrath which hurl'd to Pluto's gloomy reign
The souls of mighty chiefs untimely slain.

The stern Pelides' *rage*, O goddess, sing,
wrath
Of all the woes *of Greece* the fatal spring,
Grecian
That strew'd with *warriors* dead the Phrygian plain,
heroes
And *peopled the dark hell with heroes* slain;
fill'd the shady hell with chiefs untimely

Whose limbs, unburied on the naked shore,
Devouring dogs and hungry vultures tore,
Since great *Achilles* and *Atrides* strove;
Such was the sovereign doom, and such the will of Jove.

Whose limbs, unburied on the hostile shore,
Devouring dogs and greedy vultures tore,
Since first *Atrides* and *Achilles* strove;
Such was the sovereign doom, and such the will of Jove.

Declare, O muse, in what ill-fated hour
Sprung the fierce strife, from what offended power?
Latona's son a dire contagion spread,
And heap'd the camp with mountains of the dead;
The king of men his reverend priest defy'd,
And for the king's offence the people dy'd.

Declare, O goddess, what offended power
Enflam'd their *rage*, in that *ill-omen'd* hour;
anger, fatal, hapless
Phœbus himself the *dire* debate procur'd.
fierce
T' avenge the wrongs his injur'd priest endur'd;
For this the god a dire infection spread,
And heap'd the camp with millions of the dead:
The king of men the sacred sire defy'd,
And for the king's offences the peopled dy'd.

For Chryses sought with costly gifts to gain
His captive daughter from the victor's chain;
Suppliant the venerable father stands,
Apollo's awful ensigns grace his hands,
By these he begs, and, lowly bending down,
Extends the sceptre and the laurel crown.

For Chryses sought by *presents to regain*
costly gifts to gain
His captive daughter from the victor's chain;
Suppliant the venerable father stands,
Apollo's awful ensigns grac'd his hands,
By these he begs, and, lowly bending down
The golden sceptre and the laurel crown,
Presents the sceptre
For these as ensigns of his god he bare,
The god that sends his golden shafts afar;
Then low on earth, the venerable man,
Suppliant before the brother kings began.

He sued to all, but chief implor'd for grace
The brother kings of Atreus' royal race;
Ye kings and warriors, may your vows be crown'd,
And Troy's proud walls lie level with the ground;
May Jove restore you, when your toils are o'er,
Safe to the pleasures of your native shore.

To all he sued, but chief implor'd for grace
The brother kings of Atreus' royal race.
Ye *sons of Atreus*, may your vows be crown'd,
Kings and warriors

Your labours, by the gods be all your labours crown'd;
So may the gods your arms with conquest bless,
And Troy's proud walls *lie* level with the ground:

Till *laid*

And crown your labours with deserv'd success;
May Jove restore you, when your toils are o'er,
Safe to the pleasures of your native shore.

But, oh! relieve a wretched parent's pain,
And give Chryseis to these arms again;
If mercy fail, yet let my present move,
And dread avenging Phœbus, son of Jove.

But, oh! relieve a hapless parent's pain,
And give my daughter to these arms again;
Receive my gifts; if mercy fails, yet let my present move,
And fear *the god that deals his darts around,*

avenging Phœbus, son of Jove.

The Greeks, in shouts, their joint assent declare
The priest to reverence, and release the fair.
Not so Atrides; he, with kingly pride,
Repuls'd the sacred sire, and thus reply'd.

He said, the Greeks, their joint assent declare,
The father said, the gen'rous Greeks relent,
T' accept the ransom, and release the fair:
Revere the priest, and speak their joint assent:
Not so *the tyrant*, he, with kingly pride,

Atrides,

Repuls'd the sacred sire, and thus replied.
[Not so the tyrant. DRYDEN.]

Of these lines, and of the whole first book, I am told that there was yet a former copy, more varied, and more deformed with interlineations.

The beginning of the second book varies very little from the printed page, and is, therefore, set down without a parallel; the few differences do not require to be elaborately displayed.

Now pleasing sleep had seal'd each mortal eye;
Stretch'd in their tents the Grecian leaders lie;

Th' immortals slumber'd on their thrones above,
All but the ever watchful eye of Jove.
To honour Thetis' son he bends his care,
And plunge the Greeks in all the woes of war.
Then bids an empty phantom rise to sight,
And thus *commands* the vision of the night:

directs

Fly hence, delusive dream, and, light as air,
To Agamemnon's royal tent repair;
Bid him in arms draw forth th' embattled train,
March all his legions to the dusty plain.
Now tell the king 'tis given him to destroy
Declare ev'n now
The lofty *walls* of wide-extended Troy;

tow'rs

For now no more the gods with fate contend,
At Juno's suit the heavenly factions end.
Destruction *hovers* o'er yon devoted wall,

hangs

And nodding Ilium waits th' impending fall.

Invocation to the catalogue of ships:

Say, virgins, seated round the throne divine,
All-knowing goddesses! immortal nine!
Since earth's wide regions, heaven's unmeasur'd height,
And hell's abyss, hide nothing from your sight,
(We, wretched mortals! lost in doubts below,
But guess by rumour, and but boast we know,)
Oh! say what heroes, fir'd by thirst of fame,
Or urg'd by wrongs, to Troy's destruction came!
To count them all demands a thousand tongues,
A throat of brass and adamantine lungs.

Now, virgin goddesses, immortal nine!
That round Olympus' heavenly summit shine,
Who see through heaven and earth, and hell profound,
And all things know, and all things can resound!
Relate what armies sought the Trojan land,
What nations follow'd, and what chiefs command;
(For doubtful fame distracts mankind below,
And nothing can we tell, and nothing know,)
Without your aid, to count th' unnumber'd train,
A thousand mouths, a thousand tongues, were vain.

Book v. *v.* 1.

But Pallas now Tydides' soul inspires,
Fills with her force, and warms with all her fires;
Above the Greeks his deathless fame to raise,
And crown her hero with distinguish'd praise.
High on his helm celestial lightnings play,
His beamy shield emits a living ray;
Th' unwearied blaze incessant streams supplies,
Like the red star that fires th' autumnal skies.

But Pallas now Tydides' soul inspires,
Fills with her *rage*, and warms with all her fires;
force,
O'er all the Greeks decrees his fame to raise,
Above the Greeks *her warrior's* fame to raise,
his deathless
And crown her hero with *immortal* praise:
distinguish'd
Bright from his beamy *crest* the lightnings play,
High on helm
From his broad buckler flash'd the living ray;
High on his helm celestial lightnings play,
His beamy shield emits a living ray.
The goddess with her breath the flame supplies,
Bright as the star whose fires in autumn rise;
Her breath divine thick streaming flames supplies,
Bright as the star that fires th' autumnal skies:
Th' unwearied blaze incessant streams supplies,
Like the red star that fires th' autumnal skies.

When first he rears his radiant orb to sight,
And, bath'd in ocean, shoots a keener light.
Such glories Pallas on the chief bestow'd,
Such from his arms the fierce effulgence flow'd;
Onward she drives him, furious to engage,
Where the fight burns, and where the thickest rage.

When fresh he rears his radiant orb to sight,
And gilds old ocean with a blaze of light,
Bright as the star that fires th' autumnal skies;
Fresh from the deep, and gilds the seas and skies;
Such glories Pallas on her chief bestow'd,
Such sparkling rays from his bright armour flow'd;
Such from his arms the fierce effulgence flow'd;
Onward she drives him *headlong* to engage,
furious
Where the *war bleeds*, and where the *fiercest* rage.
fight burns, thickest

The sons of Dares first the combat sought,
A wealthy priest, but rich without a fault;
In Vulcan's fane the father's days were led,
The sons to toils of glorious battle bred.

There liv'd a Trojan—Dares was his name,
The priest of Vulcan, rich, yet void of blame;
The sons of Dares first the combat sought,
A wealthy priest, but rich without a fault.

Conclusion of Book viii. *v.* 687.

As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,
O'er heaven's clear azure spreads her sacred light,
When not a breath disturbs the deep serene,
And not a cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene,
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole;
O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed,
And tip with silver every mountain's head;
Then shine the vales, the rocks in prospect rise,
A flood of glory bursts from all the skies;
The conscious swains, rejoicing in the sight,
Eye the blue vault, and bless the useful light.
So many flames before proud Ilion blaze,
And lighten glimmering Xanthus with their rays;
The long reflections of the distant fires
Gleam on the walls, and tremble on the spires.
A thousand piles the dusky horrors gild,
And shoot a shady lustre o'er the field.
Full fifty guards each flaming pile attend,
Whose umber'd arms by fits thick flashes send;
Loud neigh the coursers o'er their heaps of corn,
And ardent warriors wait the rising morn.

As when in stillness of the silent night,
As when the moon, in all her lustre bright;
As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,
O'er heav'n's *clear* azure *sheds* her *silver* light;

pure spreads sacred

As still in air the trembling lustre stood,
And o'er its golden border shoots a flood;
When *no loose gale* disturbs the deep serene,

not a breath

And *no dim* cloud o'ercasts the solemn scene;

not a

Around her silver throne the planets glow,
And stars unnumber'd trembling beams bestow:
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole;
Clear gleams of light o'er the dark trees are seen,
o'er the dark trees a yellow sheds,
O'er the dark trees a yellower *green* they shed,
gleam
verdure
And tip with silver all the *mountain* heads.
forest
And tip with silver every mountain's head.
The valleys open, and the forests rise,
The vales appear, the rocks in prospect rise,
Then shine the vales, the rocks in prospect rise,
All nature stands reveal'd before our eyes;
A flood of glory bursts from all the skies.
The conscious shepherd, joyful at the sight,
Eyes the blue vault, and numbers every light.
The conscious *swains rejoicing at the* sight,
shepherds gazing with delight,
Eye the blue vault, and bless the *vivid* light,
glorious
useful
So many flames before *the navy* blaze,
proud Ilion
And lighten glimmering Xanthus with their rays;
Wide o'er the fields to Troy extend the gleams,
And tip the distant spires with fainter beams;
The long reflections of the distant fires
Gild the high walls, and tremble on the spires;
Gleam on the walls, and tremble on the spires;
A thousand fires at distant stations bright,
Gild the dark prospect, and dispel the night.

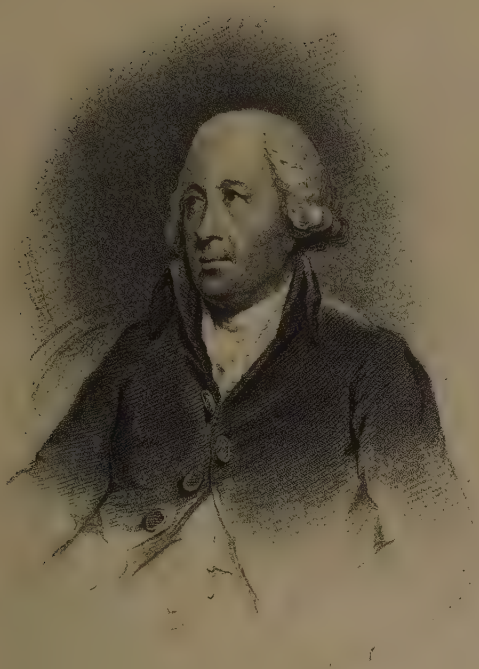
Of these specimens every man who has cultivated poetry, or who delights to trace the mind from the rudeness of its first conceptions to the elegance of its last, will naturally desire a greater number; but most other readers are already tired, and I am not writing only to poets and philosophers.

The Iliad was published volume by volume, as the translation proceeded: the four first books appeared

in 1715. The expectation of this work was undoubtedly high, and every man who had connected his name with criticism, or poetry, was desirous of such intelligence as might enable him to talk upon the popular topick. Halifax, who, by having been first a poet, and then a patron of poetry, had acquired the right of being a judge, was willing to hear some books while they were yet unpublished. Of this rehearsal Pope afterwards gave the following account[z]:

"The famous lord Halifax was rather a pretender to taste, than really possessed of it. When I had finished the two or three first books of my translation of the Iliad, that lord desired to have the pleasure of hearing them read at his house. Addison, Congreve, and Garth, were there at the reading. In four or five places, lord Halifax stopped me very civilly, and with a speech each time of much the same kind, 'I beg your pardon, Mr. Pope; but there is something in that passage that does not quite please me. Be so good as to mark the place, and consider it a little at your leisure. I'm sure you can give it a little turn.' I returned from lord Halifax's with Dr. Garth, in his chariot: and, as we were going along, was saying to the doctor, that my lord had laid me under a great deal of difficulty by such loose and general observations; that I had been thinking over the passages almost ever since, and could not guess what it was that offended his lordship in either of them. Garth laughed heartily at my embarrass-

[z] Spence.



Painted by H. Raeburn

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ment; said, I had not been long enough acquainted with lord Halifax, to know his way yet; that I need not puzzle myself about looking those places over and over when I got home. 'All you need do,' says he, 'is to leave them just as they are; call on lord Halifax two or three months hence, thank him for his kind observations on those passages, and then read them to him as altered. I have known him much longer than you have, and will be answerable for the event.' I followed his advice; waited on lord Halifax some time after; said, I hoped he would find his objections to those passages removed; read them to him exactly as they were at first; and his lordship was extremely pleased with them, and cried out, 'Aye, now they are perfectly right: nothing can be better[a].' ''

It is seldom that the great or the wise suspect that they are despised or cheated. Halifax, thinking this a lucky opportunity of securing immortality, made some advances of favour and some overtures of advantage to Pope, which he seems to have received with sullen coldness. All our knowledge of this transaction is derived from a single letter, Dec. 1, 1714, in which Pope says, "I am obliged to you, both for the favours you have done me, and those you intend me. I distrust neither your will nor your memory, when it is to do good; and if I ever become troublesome, or solicitous, it must not be out of expecta-

[a] As this story was related by Pope himself, it was most probably true. Had it rested on any other authority, I should have suspected it to have been borrowed from one of Poggio's Tales. De Jannoto Vicecomite. J. B.

tion, but out of gratitude. Your lordship may cause me to live agreeably in the town, or contentedly in the country, which is really all the difference I set between an easy fortune and a small one. It is, indeed, a high strain of generosity in you to think of making me easy all my life, only because I have been so happy as to divert you some few hours; but, if I may have leave to add, it is because you think me no enemy to my native country, there will appear a better reason; for I must of consequence be very much, as I sincerely am, yours, &c.''

These voluntary offers, and this faint acceptance, ended without effect. The patron was not accustomed to such frigid gratitude: and the poet fed his own pride with the dignity of independence. They probably were suspicious of each other. Pope would not dedicate till he saw at what rate his praise was valued; he would be ''troublesome out of gratitude, not expectation.'' Halifax thought himself entitled to confidence; and would give nothing, unless he knew what he should receive. Their commerce had its beginning in hope of praise on one side, and of money on the other, and ended because Pope was less eager of money than Halifax of praise. It is not likely that Halifax had any personal benevolence to Pope; it is evident that Pope looked on Halifax with scorn and hatred[b].

The reputation of this great work failed of gaining him a patron; but it deprived him of a friend. Addison and he were now at the head of poetry and

[b] On this point, see notes on Halifax's life in this edition.

criticism; and both in such a state of elevation, that, like the two rivals in the Roman state, one could no longer bear an equal, nor the other a superiour. Of the gradual abatement of kindness between friends, the beginning is often scarcely discernible by themselves, and the process is continued by petty provocations, and incivilities sometimes peevishly returned, and sometimes contemptuously neglected, which would escape all attention but that of pride, and drop from any memory but that of resentment. That the quarrel of these two wits should be minutely deduced, is not to be expected from a writer to whom, as Homer says, "nothing but rumour has reached, and who has no personal knowledge."

Pope doubtless approached Addison, when the reputation of their wit first brought them together, with the respect due to a man whose abilities were acknowledged, and who, having attained that eminence to which he was himself aspiring, had in his hands the distribution of literary fame. He paid court with sufficient diligence by his prologue to Cato, by his abuse of Dennis, and with praise yet more direct, by his poem on the Dialogues on Medals, of which the immediate publication was then intended. In all this there was no hypocrisy; for he confessed that he found in Addison something more pleasing than in any other man.

It may be supposed, that as Pope saw himself favoured by the world, and more frequently compared his own powers with those of others, his confidence increased, and his submission lessened: and

that Addison felt no delight from the advances of a young wit, who might soon contend with him for the highest place. Every great man, of whatever kind be his greatness, has among his friends those who officiously or insidiously quicken his attention to offences, heighten his disgust, and stimulate his resentment. Of such adherents Addison doubtless had many; and Pope was now too high to be without them.

From the emission and reception of the proposals for the Iliad, the kindness of Addison seems to have abated. Jervas, the painter, once pleased himself, Aug. 20, 1714, with imagining that he had reestablished their friendship; and wrote to Pope that Addison once suspected him of too close a confederacy with Swift, but was now satisfied with his conduct. To this Pope answered, a week after, that his engagements to Swift were such as his services in regard to the subscription demanded, and that the tories never put him under the necessity of asking leave to be grateful. "But," says he, "as Mr. Addison must be the judge in what regards himself, and has seemed to be no just one to me, so I must own to you I expect nothing but civility from him." In the same letter he mentions Philips, as having been busy to kindle animosity between them; but in a letter to Addison, he expresses some consciousness of behaviour, inattentively deficient in respect.

Of Swift's industry in promoting the subscription there remains the testimony of Kennet, no friend to either him or Pope.

"Nov. 2, 1713, Dr. Swift came into the coffee-house, and had a bow from every body but me, who, I confess, could not but despise him. When I came to the ante-chamber to wait, before prayers, Dr. Swift was the principal man of talk and business, and acted as master of requests. Then he instructed a young nobleman, that the *best poet in England* was Mr. Pope, a papist, who had begun a translation of Homer into English verse, for which *he must have them all subscribe;* for, says he, the author *shall not* begin to print till *I have* a thousand guineas for him."

About this time it is likely that Steele, who was, with all his political fury, good-natured and officious, procured an interview between these angry rivals, which ended in aggravated malevolence. On this occasion, if the reports be true, Pope made his complaint with frankness and spirit, as a man undeservedly neglected or opposed; and Addison affected a contemptuous unconcern, and, in a calm even voice, reproached Pope with his vanity, and, telling him of the improvements which his early works had received from his own remarks and those of Steele, said, that he, being now engaged in publick business, had no longer any care for his poetical reputation, nor had any other desire, with regard to Pope, than that he should not, by too much arrogance, alienate the publick.

To this Pope is said to have replied with great keenness and severity, upbraiding Addison with perpetual dependance, and with the abuse of those

qualifications which he had obtained at the publick cost, and charging him with mean endeavours to obstruct the progress of rising merit. The contest rose so high, that they parted at last without any interchange of civility.

The first volume of Homer was, 1715, in time published; and a rival version of the first Iliad, for rivals the time of their appearance inevitably made them, was immediately printed, with the name of Tickell. It was soon perceived that, among the followers of Addison, Tickell had the preference, and the criticks and poets divided into factions. "I," says Pope, "have the town, that is, the mob, on my side; but it is not uncommon for the smaller party to supply by industry what it wants in numbers. I appeal to the people as my rightful judges, and while they are not inclined to condemn me, shall not fear the highfliers at Button's." This opposition he immediately imputed to Addison, and complained of it in terms sufficiently resentful to Craggs, their common friend.

When Addison's opinion was asked, he declared the versions to be both good, but Tickell's the best that had ever been written; and sometimes said, that they were both good, but that Tickell had more of Homer.

Pope was now sufficiently irritated; his reputation and his interest were at hazard. He once intended to print together the four versions of Dryden, Maynwaring, Pope, and Tickell, that they might be readily compared, and fairly estimated. This design

seems to have been defeated by the refusal of Tonson, who was the proprietor of the other three versions.

Pope intended, at another time, a rigorous criticism of Tickell's translation, and had marked a copy, which I have seen, in all places that appeared defective. But, while he was thus meditating defence or revenge, his adversary sunk before him without a blow; the voice of the publick was not long divided, and the preference was universally given to Pope's performance.

He was convinced, by adding one circumstance to another, that the other translation was the work of Addison himself; but, if he knew it in Addison's lifetime, it does not appear that he told it. He left his illustrious antagonist to be punished by what has been considered as the most painful of all reflections, the remembrance of a crime perpetrated in vain.

The other circumstances of their quarrel were thus related by Pope[c].

"Philips seemed to have been encouraged to abuse me in coffee-houses, and conversations: and Gildon wrote a thing about Wycherley, in which he had abused both me and my relations very grossly. Lord Warwick himself told me one day, that it was in vain for me to endeavour to be well with Mr. Addison; that his jealous temper would never admit of a settled friendship between us; and, to convince me of what he had said, assured me, that

[c] Spence.

Addison had encouraged Gildon to publish those scandals, and had given him ten guineas after they were published. The next day, while I was heated with what I had heard, I wrote a letter to Mr. Addison, to let him know that I was not unacquainted with this behaviour of his; that if I was to speak severely of him in return for it, it should be not in such a dirty way; that I should rather tell him, himself, fairly of his faults, and allow his good qualities; and, that it should be something in the following manner: I then adjoined the first sketch of what has since been called my satire on Addison. Mr. Addison used me very civilly ever after[d]."

The verses on Addison, when they were sent to Atterbury, were considered by him as the most excellent of Pope's performances; and the writer was advised, since he knew where his strength lay, not to suffer it to remain unemployed.

This year, 1715, being, by the subscription, enabled to live more by choice, having persuaded his father to sell their estate at Binfield, he purchased, I think, only for his life, that house at Twickenham, to which his residence afterwards procured so much celebration, and removed thither with his father and mother.

Here he planted the vines and the quincunx which his verses mention; and, being under the necessity of making a subterraneous passage to a garden on the other side of the road, he adorned it

[d] See, however, the Life of Addison in the Biographia Britannica, last edition. R.

with fossile bodies, and dignified it with the title of a grotto, a place of silence and retreat, from which he endeavoured to persuade his friends and himself that cares and passions could be excluded.

A grotto is not often the wish or pleasure of an Englishman, who has more frequent need to solicit than exclude the sun; but Pope's excavation was requisite as an entrance to his garden, and, as some men try to be proud of their defects, he extracted an ornament from an inconvenience, and vanity produced a grotto where necessity enforced a passage. It may be frequently remarked of the studious and speculative, that they are proud of trifles, and that their amusements seem frivolous and childish; whether it be that men, conscious of great reputation, think themselves above the reach of censure, and safe in the admission of negligent indulgences, or that mankind expect from elevated genius an uniformity of greatness, and watch its degradation with malicious wonder; like him who, having followed with his eye an eagle into the clouds, should lament that she ever descended to a perch.

While the volumes of his Homer were annually published, he collected his former works, 1717, into one quarto volume, to which he prefixed a preface, written with great sprightliness and elegance, which was afterwards reprinted, with some passages subjoined that he at first omitted; other marginal additions of the same kind he made in the later editions of his poems. Waller remarks, that poets lose half their praise, because the reader knows not

what they have blotted. Pope's voracity of fame taught him the art of obtaining the accumulated honour, both of what he had published, and of what he had suppressed.

In this year his father died suddenly, in his seventy-fifth year, having passed twenty-nine years in privacy. He is not known but by the character which his son has given him. If the money with which he retired was all gotten by himself, he had traded very successfully in times when sudden riches were rarely attainable.

The publication of the Iliad was at last completed in 1720. The splendour and success of this work raised Pope many enemies, that endeavoured to depreciate his abilities. Burnett, who was afterwards a judge of no mean reputation, censured him in a piece called Homerides, before it was published. Ducket, likewise, endeavoured to make him ridiculous. Dennis was the perpetual persecutor of all his studies. But, whoever his criticks were, their writings are lost; and the names which are preserved are preserved in the Dunciad.

In this disastrous year, 1720, of national infatuation, when more riches than Peru can boast were expected from the South-sea, when the contagion of avarice tainted every mind, and even poets panted after wealth, Pope was seized with the universal passion, and ventured some of his money. The stock rose in its price; and for awhile he thought himself the lord of thousands. But this dream of happiness did not last long; and he seems to have waked soon

enough to get clear with the loss only of what he once thought himself to have won, and perhaps not wholly of that.

Next year he published some select poems of his friend Dr. Parnell, with a very elegant dedication to the earl of Oxford; who, after all his struggles and dangers, then lived in retirement, still under the frown of a victorious faction, who could take no pleasure in hearing his praise.

He gave the same year, 1721, an edition of Shakespeare. His name was now of so much authority, that Tonson thought himself entitled, by annexing it, to demand a subscription of six guineas for Shakespeare's plays, in six quarto volumes; nor did his expectation much deceive him; for, of seven hundred and fifty which he printed, he dispersed a great number at the price proposed. The reputation of that edition, indeed, sunk afterwards so low, that one hundred and forty copies were sold at sixteen shillings each.

On this undertaking, to which Pope was induced by a reward of two hundred and seventeen pounds twelve shillings, he seems never to have reflected afterwards without vexation; for Theobald, a man of heavy diligence, with very slender powers, first, in a book called Shakespeare Restored, and then in a formal edition, detected his deficiencies with all the insolence of victory; and as he was now high enough to be feared and hated, Theobald had from others all the help that could be supplied, by the desire of humbling a haughty character.

From this time Pope became an enemy to editors, collators, commentators, and verbal criticks; and hoped to persuade the world, that he miscarried in this undertaking, only by having a mind too great for such minute employment.

Pope in his edition undoubtedly did many things wrong, and left many things undone; but let him not be defrauded of his due praise. He was the first that knew, at least the first that told, by what helps the text might be improved. If he inspected the early editions negligently, he taught others to be more accurate. In his preface, he expanded, with great skill and elegance, the character which had been given of Shakespeare by Dryden; and he drew the publick attention upon his works, which, though often mentioned, had been little read.

Soon after the appearance of the Iliad, resolving not to let the general kindness cool, he published proposals for a translation of the Odyssey, in five volumes, for five guineas. He was willing, however, now to have associates in his labour, being either weary with toiling upon another's thoughts, or having heard, as Ruffhead relates, that Fenton and Broome had already begun the work, and liking better to have them confederates than rivals.

In the patent, instead of saying that he had "translated" the Odyssey, as he had said of the Iliad, he says, that he had "undertaken" a translation; and in the proposals, the subscription is said to be not solely for his own use, but for that of "two of his friends, who have assisted him in this work."

In 1723, while he was engaged in this new version, he appeared before the lords at the memorable trial of bishop Atterbury, with whom he had lived in great familiarity, and frequent correspondence. Atterbury had honestly recommended to him the study of the popish controversy, in hope of his conversion; to which Pope answered in a manner that cannot much recommend his principles, or his judgment[e]. In questions and projects of learning they agreed better. He was called at the trial to give an account of Atterbury's domestick life and private employment, that it might appear how little time he had left for plots. Pope had but few words to utter, and in those few he made several blunders.

His letters to Atterbury express the utmost esteem, tenderness, and gratitude; "perhaps," says he, "it is not only in this world that I may have cause to remember the bishop of Rochester." At their last interview in the Tower, Atterbury presented him with a bible[f].

Of the Odyssey, Pope translated only twelve books; the rest were the work of Broome and Fenton: the notes were written wholly by Broome, who was not over-liberally rewarded. The publick was carefully kept ignorant of the several shares; and an account was subjoined at the conclusion, which is now known not to be true.

[e] See the letter containing Pope's answer to the bishop's arguments in Roscoe's life, i. 212.

[f] The late Mr. Graves, of Claverton, informs us, that this bible was afterwards used in the chapel of Prior-park. Dr. Warburton probably presented it to Mr. Allen.

The first copy of Pope's books, with those of Fenton, are to be seen in the Museum. The parts of Pope are less interlined than the Iliad; and the latter books of the Iliad less than the former. He grew dexterous by practice, and every sheet enabled him to write the next with more facility. The books of Fenton have very few alterations by the hand of Pope. Those of Broome have not been found; but Pope complained, as it is reported, that he had much trouble in correcting them.

His contract with Lintot was the same as for the Iliad, except that only one hundred pounds were to be paid him for each volume. The number of subscribers was five hundred and seventy-four, and of copies eight hundred and nineteen; so that his profit, when he had paid his assistants, was still very considerable. The work was finished in 1725; and from that time he resolved to make no more translations.

The sale did not answer Lintot's expectations; and he then pretended to discover something of fraud in Pope, and commenced or threatened a suit in Chancery.

On the English Odyssey a criticism was published by Spence, at that time prelector of poetry at Oxford; a man whose learning was not very great, and whose mind was not very powerful. His criticism, however, was commonly just; what he thought, he thought rightly; and his remarks were recommended by his coolness and candour. In him Pope had the first experience of a critick without malevolence, who thought it as much his duty to display beauties

as expose faults; who censured with respect, and praised with alacrity.

With this criticism Pope was so little offended, that he sought the acquaintance of the writer, who lived with him, from that time, in great familiarity, attended him in his last hours, and compiled memorials of his conversation. The regard of Pope recommended him to the great and powerful; and he obtained very valuable preferments in the church.

Not long after, Pope was returning home, from a visit, in a friend's coach, which, in passing a bridge, was overturned into the water; the windows were closed, and being unable to force them open, he was in danger of immediate death, when the postillion snatched him out by breaking the glass, of which the fragments cut two of his fingers in such a manner, that he lost their use.

Voltaire, who was then in England, sent him a letter of consolation. He had been entertained by Pope at his table, where he talked with so much grossness, that Mrs. Pope was driven from the room. Pope discovered, by a trick, that he was a spy for the court, and never considered him as a man worthy of confidence.

He soon afterwards, 1727, joined with Swift, who was then in England, to publish three volumes of Miscellanies, in which, amongst other things, he inserted the Memoirs of a Parish Clerk, in ridicule of Burnet's importance in his own history, and a Debate upon Black and White Horses, written in all the formalities of a legal process by the assistance, as is

said, of Mr. Fortescue, afterwards master of the Rolls. Before these Miscellanies is a preface signed by Swift and Pope, but apparently written by Pope; in which he makes a ridiculous and romantick complaint of the robberies committed upon authors by the clandestine seizure and sale of their papers. He tells, in tragick strains, how "the cabinets of the sick and the closets of the dead have been broke open and ransacked;" as if those violences were often committed for papers of uncertain and accidental value, which are rarely provoked by real treasures; as if epigrams and essays were in danger, where gold and diamonds are safe. A cat hunted for his musk is, according to Pope's account, but the emblem of a wit winded by booksellers.

His complaint, however, received some attestation; for, the same year, the letters written by him, to Mr. Cromwell, in his youth, were sold by Mrs. Thomas to Curll, who printed them.

In these Miscellanies was first published the Art of Sinking in Poetry, which, by such a train of consequences as usually passes in literary quarrels, gave, in a short time, according to Pope's account, occasion to the Dunciad.

In the following year, 1728, he began to put Atterbury's advice in practice; and showed his satirical powers by publishing the Dunciad, one of his greatest and most elaborate performances, in which he endeavoured to sink into contempt all the writers by whom he had been attacked, and some others whom he thought unable to defend themselves.

At the head of the *dunces* he placed poor Theobald, whom he accused of ingratitude; but whose real crime was supposed to be that of having revised Shakespeare more happily than himself. This satire had the effect which he intended, by blasting the characters which it touched. Ralph[g], who, unnecessarily interposing in the quarrel, got a place in a subsequent edition, complained that, for a time, he was in danger of starving, as the booksellers had no longer any confidence in his capacity.

The prevalence of this poem was gradual and slow; the plan, if not wholly new, was little understood by common readers. Many of the allusions required illustration; the names were often expressed only by the initial and final letters, and, if they had been printed at length, were such as few had known or recollected. The subject itself had nothing generally interesting, for whom did it concern to know that one or another scribbler was a dunce? If, therefore, it had been possible for those who were attacked to conceal their pain and their resentment, the Dunciad might have made its way very slowly in the world.

This, however, was not to be expected: every man is of importance to himself, and, therefore, in his own opinion, to others; and, supposing the world already acquainted with all his pleasures and his pains, is, perhaps, the first to publish injuries or misfortunes, which had never been known unless related by himself, and at which those that hear them will

[g] See note to Adventurer, No. 138.

only laugh; for no man sympathizes with the sorrows of vanity.

The history of the Dunciad is very minutely related by Pope himself, in a dedication which he wrote to lord Middlesex in the name of Savage.

"I will relate the war of the *dunces*, (for so it has been commonly called,) which began in the year 1727, and ended in 1730."

"When Dr. Swift and Mr. Pope thought it proper, for reasons specified in the preface to their Miscellanies, to publish such little pieces of theirs as had casually got abroad, there was added to them the treatise of the Bathos, or the Art of Sinking in Poetry. It happened that, in one chapter of this piece, the several species of bad poets were ranged in classes, to which were prefixed almost all the letters of the alphabet; (the greatest part of them at random;) but such was the number of poets eminent in that art, that some one or other took every letter to himself: all fell into so violent a fury, that, for half a year or more, the common newspapers (in most of which they had some property, as being hired writers) were filled with the most abusive falsehoods and scurrilities they could possibly devise; a liberty no way to be wondered at in those people, and in those papers, that, for many years, during the uncontrouled license of the press, had aspersed almost all the great characters of the age, and this with impunity, their own persons and names being utterly secret and obscure.

"This gave Mr. Pope the thought, that he had

now some opportunity of doing good, by detecting and dragging into light these common enemies of mankind; since to invalidate this universal slander, it sufficed to show what contemptible men were the authors of it. He was not without hopes that, by manifesting the dulness of those who had only malice to recommend them, either the booksellers would not find their account in employing them, or the men themselves, when discovered, want courage to proceed in so unlawful an occupation. This it was that gave birth to the Dunciad; and he thought it an happiness, that, by the late flood of slander on himself, he had acquired such a peculiar right over their names as was necessary to this design.

"On the 12th of March, 1729, at St. James's, that poem was presented to the king and queen (who had before been pleased to read it) by the right honourable sir Robert Walpole; and, some days after, the whole impression was taken and dispersed by several noblemen, and persons of the first distinction.

"It is, certainly, a true observation, that no people are so impatient of censure as those who are the greatest slanderers, which was wonderfully exemplified on this occasion. On the day the book was first vended, a crowd of authors besieged the shop; entreaties, advices, threats of law and battery, nay, cries of treason, were all employed to hinder the coming out of the Dunciad; on the other side, the booksellers and hawkers made as great efforts to procure it. What could a few poor authors do against

so great a majority as the publick? There was no stopping a torrent with a finger; so out it came.

"Many ludicrous circumstances attended it. The *dunces* (for by this name they were called) held weekly clubs, to consult of hostilities against the author; one wrote a letter to a great minister, assuring him Mr. Pope was the greatest enemy the government had; and another bought his image in clay, to execute him in effigy; with which sad sort of satisfaction the gentlemen were a little comforted.

"Some false editions of the book having an owl in their frontispiece, the true one, to distinguish it, fixed in its stead an ass laden with authors. Then another surreptitious one being printed with the same ass, the new edition in octavo returned, for distinction, to the owl again. Hence arose a great contest of booksellers against booksellers, and advertisements against advertisements; some recommending the edition of the owl, and others the edition of the ass; by which names they came to be distinguished, to the great honour also of the gentlemen of the Dunciad."

Pope appears, by this narrative, to have contemplated his victory over the *dunces* with great exultation; and such was his delight in the tumult which he had raised, that for awhile his natural sensibility was suspended, and he read reproaches and invectives without emotion, considering them only as the necessary effects of that pain which he rejoiced in having given.

It cannot, however, be concealed that, by his own

confession, he was the aggressor; for nobody believes that the letters in the Bathos were placed at random; and it may be discovered that, when he thinks himself concealed, he indulges the common vanity of common men, and triumphs in those distinctions which he had affected to despise. He is proud that his book was presented to the king and queen by the right honourable sir Robert Walpole; he is proud that they had read it before; he is proud that the edition was taken off by the nobility and persons of the first distinction.

The edition of which he speaks was, I believe, that which, by telling in the text the names, and in the notes the characters, of those whom he had satirized, was made intelligible and diverting. The criticks had now declared their approbation of the plan, and the common reader began to like it without fear; those who were strangers to petty literature, and, therefore, unable to decipher initials and blanks, had now names and persons brought within their view; and delighted in the visible effect of those shafts of malice, which they had hitherto contemplated, as shot into the air.

Dennis, upon the fresh provocation now given him, renewed the enmity which had, for a time, been appeased by mutual civilities; and published remarks, which he had till then suppressed, upon the Rape of the Lock. Many more grumbled in secret, or vented their resentment in the newspapers by epigrams or invectives.

Ducket, indeed, being mentioned as loving Bur-

net with "pious passion," pretended that his moral character was injured, and, for some time, declared his resolution to take vengeance with a cudgel. But Pope appeased him, by changing "pious passion" to "cordial friendship;" and by a note, in which he vehemently disclaims the malignity of meaning imputed to the first expression.

Aaron Hill, who was represented as diving for the prize, expostulated with Pope in a manner so much superiour to all mean solicitation, that Pope was reduced to sneak and shuffle, sometimes to deny, and sometimes to apologize; he first endeavours to wound, and is then afraid to own that he meant a blow.

The Dunciad, in the complete edition, is addressed to Dr. Swift: of the notes, part were written by Dr. Arbuthnot; and an apologetical letter was prefixed, signed by Cleland, but supposed to have been written by Pope.

After this general war upon dulness, he seems to have indulged himself awhile in tranquillity; but his subsequent productions prove that he was not idle. He published, 1731, a poem on Taste, in which he very particularly and severely criticises the house, the furniture, the gardens, and the entertainments, of Timon, a man of great wealth and little taste. By Timon he was universally supposed, and by the earl of Burlington, to whom the poem was addressed, was privately said, to mean the duke of Chandos; a man, perhaps, too much delighted with pomp and show, but of a temper kind and beneficent, and who

had, consequently, the voice of the publick in his favour.

A violent outcry was, therefore, raised against the ingratitude and treachery of Pope, who was said to have been indebted to the patronage of Chandos for a present of a thousand pounds, and who gained the opportunity of insulting him by the kindness of his invitation.

The receipt of the thousand pounds Pope publickly denied; but from the reproach which the attack on a character so amiable brought upon him, he tried all means of escaping. The name of Cleland was again employed in an apology, by which no man was satisfied; and he was at last reduced to shelter his temerity behind dissimulation, and endeavour to make that disbelieved which he never had confidence openly to deny. He wrote an exculpatory letter to the duke, which was answered with great magnanimity, as by a man who accepted his excuse without believing his professions. He said, that to have ridiculed his taste, or his buildings, had been an indifferent action in another man; but that in Pope, after the reciprocal kindness that had been exchanged between them, it had been less easily excused.

Pope, in one of his letters, complaining of the treatment which his poem had found, "owns that such criticks can intimidate him, nay, almost persuade him to write no more, which is a compliment this age deserves." The man who threatens the world is always ridiculous; for the world can easily

go on without him, and, in a short time, will cease to miss him. I have heard of an idiot, who used to revenge his vexations by lying all night upon the bridge. "There is nothing," says Juvenal, "that a man will not believe in his own favour." Pope had been flattered till he thought himself one of the moving powers in the system of life. When he talked of laying down his pen, those who sat round him entreated and implored; and self-love did not suffer him to suspect that they went away and laughed.

The following year deprived him of Gay, a man whom he had known early, and whom he seemed to love with more tenderness than any other of his literary friends. Pope was now forty-four years old; an age at which the mind begins less easily to admit new confidence, and the will to grow less flexible; and when, therefore, the departure of an old friend is very acutely felt.

In the next year he lost his mother, not by an unexpected death, for she had lasted to the age of ninety-three; but she did not die unlamented. The filial piety of Pope was in the highest degree amiable and exemplary; his parents had the happiness of living till he was at the summit of poetical reputation, till he was at ease in his fortune, and without a rival in his fame, and found no diminution of his respect or tenderness. Whatever was his pride, to them he was obedient; and whatever was his irritability, to them he was gentle. Life has, among its soothing and quiet comforts, few things better to give than such a son.

One of the passages of Pope's life, which seems to deserve some inquiry, was a publication of letters between him and many of his friends, which falling into the hands of Curll, a rapacious bookseller of no good fame, were by him printed and sold. This volume containing some letters from noblemen, Pope incited a prosecution against him in the house of lords for a breach of privilege, and attended himself to stimulate the resentment of his friends. Curll appeared at the bar, and, knowing himself in no great danger, spoke of Pope with very little reverence. "He has," said Curll, "a knack at versifying, but in prose I think myself a match for him." When the orders of the house were examined, none of them appeared to have been infringed; Curll went away triumphant, and Pope was left to seek some other remedy.

Curll's account was, that one evening a man in a clergyman's gown, but with a lawyer's band, brought and offered to sale a number of printed volumes, which he found to be Pope's Epistolary Correspondence; that he asked no name, and was told none, but gave the price demanded, and thought himself authorised to use his purchase to his own advantage.

That Curll gave a true account of the transaction it is reasonable to believe, because no falsehood was ever detected[h]; and when, some years afterwards, I

[h] Mr. D'Israeli has discussed the whole of this affair in his Quarrels of Authors, i. 176. Mr. Roscoe likewise, in his Life of Pope, examines very fully all the evidence to be gathered on the point, and comes to a con-

mentioned it to Lintot, the son of Bernard, he declared his opinion to be, that Pope knew better than any body else how Curll obtained the copies, because another parcel was at the same time sent to himself, for which no price had ever been demanded, as he made known his resolution not to pay a porter, and consequently not to deal with a nameless agent.

Such care had been taken to make them publick, that they were sent at once to two booksellers; to Curll, who was likely to seize them as a prey; and to Lintot, who might be expected to give Pope information of the seeming injury. Lintot, I believe, did nothing; and Curll did what was expected. That to make them publick was the only purpose, may be reasonably supposed, because the numbers offered to sale by the private messengers showed that hope of gain could not have been the motive of the impression.

It seems that Pope, being desirous of printing his letters, and not knowing how to do, without imputation of vanity, what has in this country been done very rarely, contrived an appearance of compulsion; that, when he could complain that his letters were surreptitiously published, he might decently and defensively publish them himself.

Pope's private correspondence, thus promulgated, filled the nation with praises of his candour, tenderness, and benevolence, the purity of his purposes,

clusion much less reputable to Curll, than that to be inferred from Dr. Johnson's arguments. Ed.

and the fidelity of his friendship. There were some letters which a very good or a very wise man would wish suppressed; but, as they had been already exposed, it was impracticable now to retract them.

From the perusal of those letters, Mr. Allen first conceived the desire of knowing him; and with so much zeal did he cultivate the friendship which he had newly formed, that, when Pope told his purpose of vindicating his own property by a genuine edition, he offered to pay the cost.

This, however, Pope did not accept; but, in time, solicited a subscription for a quarto volume, which appeared, 1737, I believe, with sufficient profit. In the preface he tells, that his letters were reposited in a friend's library, said to be the earl of Oxford's, and that the copy thence stolen was sent to the press. The story was doubtless received with different degrees of credit. It may be suspected that the preface to the Miscellanies was written to prepare the publick for such an incident; and to strengthen this opinion, James Worsdale, a painter, who was employed in clandestine negotiations, but whose veracity was very doubtful, declared that he was the messenger who carried, by Pope's direction, the books to Curll.

When they were thus published and avowed, as they had relation to recent facts, and persons either then living or not yet forgotten, they may be supposed to have found readers; but as the facts were minute, and the characters, being either private or literary, were little known, or little regarded, they

awakened no popular kindness or resentment; the book never became much the subject of conversation; some read it as contemporary history, and some, perhaps, as a model of epistolary language; but those who read it did not talk of it. Not much, therefore, was added by it to fame or envy; nor do I remember that it produced either publick praise or publick censure.

It had, however, in some degree, the recommendation of novelty. Our language had few letters, except those of statesmen. Howel, indeed, about a century ago, published his letters, which are commended by Morhoff, and which alone, of his hundred volumes, continue his memory. Loveday's letters were printed only once; those of Herbert and Suckling are hardly known. Mrs. Phillips's (Orinda's) are equally neglected. And those of Walsh seem written as exercises, and were never sent to any living mistress or friend. Pope's epistolary excellence had an open field; he had no English rival, living or dead.

Pope is seen in this collection as connected with the other contemporary wits, and certainly suffers no disgrace in the comparison; but it must be remembered, that he had the power of favouring himself; he might have originally had publication in his mind, and have written with care, or have afterwards selected those which he had most happily conceived, or most diligently laboured; and I know not whether there does not appear something more

studied and artificial[1] in his productions than the rest, except one long letter by Bolingbroke, composed with all the skill and industry of a professed author. It is, indeed, not easy to distinguish affectation from habit; he that has once studiously formed a style, rarely writes afterwards with complete ease. Pope may be said to write always with his reputation in his head; Swift, perhaps, like a man who remembered he was writing to Pope; but Arbuthnot, like one who lets thoughts drop from his pen as they rise into his mind.

Before these letters appeared, he published the first part of what he persuaded himself to think a system of ethicks, under the title of an Essay on Man; which, if his letter to Swift, of Sept. 14, 1725, be rightly explained by the commentator, had been eight years under his consideration, and of which he seems to have desired the success with great solicitude. He had now many open, and, doubtless, many secret enemies. The *dunces* were yet smarting with the war; and the superiority which he publickly arrogated, disposed the world to wish his humiliation.

All this he knew, and against all this he provided. His own name, and that of his friend to whom the work is inscribed, were in the first editions carefully suppressed; and the poem, being of a new kind, was ascribed to one or another, as favour determined, or conjecture wandered; it was given, says Warburton, to every man, except him only who

[1] These letters were evidently prepared for the press by Pope himself. Some of the originals, lately discovered, will prove this beyond all dispute; in the edition of Pope's works, lately published by Mr. Bowles.

could write it. Those who like only when they like the author, and who are under the dominion of a name, condemned it; and those admired it who are willing to scatter praise at random, which, while it is unappropriated, excites no envy. Those friends of Pope, that were trusted with the secret, went about lavishing honours on the new-born poet, and hinting that Pope was never so much in danger from any former rival.

To those authors whom he had personally offended, and to those whose opinion the world considered as decisive, and whom he suspected of envy or malevolence, he sent his essay as a present before publication, that they might defeat their own enmity by praises, which they could not afterwards decently retract.

With these precautions, in 1733, was published the first part of the Essay on Man. There had been, for some time, a report that Pope was busy upon a system of morality; but this design was not discovered in the new poem, which had a form and a title with which its readers were unacquainted. Its reception was not uniform; some thought it a very imperfect piece, though not without good lines. While the author was unknown, some, as will always happen, favoured him as an adventurer, and some censured him as an intruder; but all thought him above neglect; the sale increased, and editions were multiplied[j].

[j] Ayre, in his Life of Pope, ii. 215, relates an amusing anecdote on this occasion. "Soon after the appearance of the first epistle," he ob-

The subsequent editions of the first epistle exhibited two memorable corrections. At first, the poet and his friend,

> Expatiate freely o'er this end of man,
> A mighty maze *of walks without a plan.*

For which he wrote afterwards,

> A mighty maze, *but not without a plan:*

for, if there were no plan, it were in vain to describe or to trace the maze.

The other alteration was of these lines:

> And spite of pride, *and in thy reason's spite,*
> One truth is clear, whatever is, is right;

but having afterwards discovered, or been shown, that the "truth" which subsisted "in spite of reason" could not be very "clear," he substituted,

> And spite of pride, *in erring reason's spite.*

To such oversights will the most vigorous mind be liable, when it is employed at once upon argument and poetry.

The second and third epistles were published; and Pope was, I believe, more and more suspected of writing them; at last, in 1734, he avowed the fourth, and claimed the honour of a moral poet.

serves, "a gentleman who had attempted some things in the poetical way, called on Pope, who inquired from him, what news there was in the learned world, and what new pieces were brought to light? The visitor replied, that there was little or nothing worthy notice; that there was, indeed, a thing called an Essay on Man, shocking poetry, insufferable philosophy, no coherence, no connexion. Pope could not repress his indignation, and instantly avowed himself the author. This was like a clap of thunder to the mistaken bard, who took up his hat and never ventured to show his unlucky face there again." It is generally supposed that Mallet was this luckless person. Ed.

In the conclusion it is sufficiently acknowledged, that the doctrine of the Essay on Man was received from Bolingbroke, who is said to have ridiculed Pope, among those who enjoyed his confidence, as having adopted and advanced principles of which he did not perceive the consequence, and as blindly propagating opinions contrary to his own. That those communications had been consolidated into a scheme regularly drawn, and delivered to Pope, from whom it returned only transformed from prose to verse, has been reported, but can hardly be true. The essay plainly appears the fabrick of a poet: what Bolingbroke supplied could be only the first principles; the order, illustration, and embellishments, must all be Pope's.

These principles it is not my business to clear from obscurity, dogmatism, or falsehood; but they were not immediately examined; philosophy and poetry have not often the same readers; and the essay abounded in splendid amplifications, and sparkling sentences, which were read and admired with no great attention to their ultimate purpose; its flowers caught the eye, which did not see what the gay foliage concealed, and, for a time, flourished in the sunshine of universal approbation. So little was any evil tendency discovered, that, as innocence is unsuspicious, many read it for a manual of piety.

Its reputation soon invited a translator. It was first turned into French prose, and afterwards, by Resnel, into verse. Both translations fell into the hands of Crousaz, who first, when he had the version

in prose, wrote a general censure, and afterwards reprinted Resnel's version, with particular remarks upon every paragraph.

Crousaz was a professor of Switzerland, eminent for his treatise of logick, and his Examen de Pyrrhonisme; and, however little known or regarded here, was no mean antagonist. His mind was one of those in which philosophy and piety are happily united. He was accustomed to argument and disquisition, and, perhaps, was grown too desirous of detecting faults; but his intentions were always right, his opinions were solid, and his religion pure.

His incessant vigilance for the promotion of piety disposed him to look with distrust upon all metaphysical systems of theology, and all schemes of virtue and happiness purely rational; and, therefore, it was not long before he was persuaded that the positions of Pope, as they terminated, for the most part, in natural religion, were intended to draw mankind away from revelation, and to represent the whole course of things as a necessary concatenation of indissoluble fatality; and it is undeniable, that in many passages a religious eye may easily discover expressions not very favourable to morals, or to liberty.

About this time Warburton began to make his appearance in the first ranks of learning. He was a man of vigorous faculties, a mind fervid and vehement, supplied by incessant and unlimited inquiry, with wonderful extent and variety of knowledge, which yet had not oppressed his imagination, nor

clouded his perspicacity. To every work he brought a memory full fraught, together with a fancy fertile of original combinations, and, at once, exerted the powers of the scholar, the reasoner, and the wit. But his knowledge was too multifarious to be always exact, and his pursuits too eager to be always cautious. His abilities gave him an haughty confidence, which he disdained to conceal or mollify; and his impatience of opposition disposed him to treat his adversaries with such contemptuous superiority, as made his readers commonly his enemies, and excited against the advocate the wishes of some who favoured the cause. He seems to have adopted the Roman emperour's determination, "oderint dum metuant;" he used no allurements of gentle language, but wished to compel rather than persuade.

His style is copious without selection, and forcible without neatness; he took the words that presented themselves: his diction is coarse and impure, and his sentences are unmeasured.

He had, in the early part of his life, pleased himself with the notice of inferiour wits, and corresponded with the enemies of Pope. A letter[k] was produced, when he had, perhaps, himself forgotten it, in which he tells Concanen, "Dryden, I observe, borrows for want of leisure, and Pope for want of genius; Milton out of pride, and Addison out of modesty." And when Theobald published Shakes-

[k] This letter is in Mr. Malone's Supplement to Shakespeare, vol. i. p. 223.

peare, in opposition to Pope, the best notes were supplied by Warburton.

But the time was now come when Warburton was to change his opinion; and Pope was to find a defender in him who had contributed so much to the exaltation of his rival.

The arrogance of Warburton excited against him every artifice of offense, and, therefore, it may be supposed that his union with Pope was censured as hypocritical inconstancy; but surely to think differently, at different times, of poetical merit, may be easily allowed. Such opinions are often admitted, and dismissed, without nice examination. Who is there that has not found reason for changing his mind about questions of greater importance?

Warburton, whatever was his motive, undertook, without solicitation, to rescue Pope from the talons of Crousaz, by freeing him from the imputation of favouring fatality, or rejecting revelation; and from month to month continued a vindication of the Essay on Man, in the literary journal of that time, called the Republick of Letters.

Pope, who probably began to doubt the tendency of his own work, was glad that the positions, of which he perceived himself not to know the full meaning, could, by any mode of interpretation, be made to mean well. How much he was pleased with his gratuitous defender, the following letter evidently shows:

"April 11, 1732.

"Sir,—I have just received from Mr. R. two

more of your letters. It is in the greatest hurry imaginable that I write this; but I cannot help thanking you in particular for your third letter, which is so extremely clear, short, and full, that I think Mr. Crousaz ought never to have another answer, and deserved not so good an one. I can only say, you do him too much honour, and me too much right, so odd as the expression seems; for you have made my system as clear as I ought to have done, and could not. It is, indeed, the same system as mine, but illustrated with a ray of your own, as they say our natural body is the same still when it is glorified. I am sure I like it better than I did before, and so will every man else. I know I meant just what you explain; but I did not explain my own meaning so well as you. You understand me as well as I do myself; but you express me better than I could express myself. Pray accept the sincerest acknowledgments. I cannot but wish these letters were put together in one book, and intend (with your leave) to procure a translation of part at least, or of all of them, into French; but I shall not proceed a step without your consent and opinion, &c."

By this fond and eager acceptance of an exculpatory comment, Pope testified that, whatever might be the seeming or real import of the principles which he had received from Bolingbroke, he had not intentionally attacked religion; and Bolingbroke, if he meant to make him, without his own consent,

an instrument of mischief, found him now engaged, with his eyes open, on the side of truth.

It is known that Bolingbroke concealed from Pope his real opinions. He once discovered them to Mr. Hooke, who related them again to Pope, and was told by him that he must have mistaken the meaning of what he heard; and Bolingbroke, when Pope's uneasiness incited him to desire an explanation, declared that Hooke had misunderstood him.

Bolingbroke hated Warburton, who had drawn his pupil from him; and a little before Pope's death they had a dispute, from which they parted with mutual aversion.

From this time Pope lived in the closest intimacy with his commentator, and amply rewarded his kindness and his zeal; for he introduced him to Mr. Murray, by whose interest he became preacher at Lincoln's inn; and to Mr. Allen, who gave him his niece and his estate, and, by consequence, a bishoprick. When he died, he left him the property of his works; a legacy which may be reasonably estimated at four thousand pounds.

Pope's fondness for the Essay on Man appeared by his desire of its propagation. Dobson, who had gained reputation by his version of Prior's Solomon, was employed by him to translate it into Latin verse, and was, for that purpose, some time at Twickenham; but he left his work, whatever was the reason, unfinished; and, by Benson's invitation, undertook the longer task of Paradise Lost. Pope then desired his friend to find a scholar who should

turn his essay into Latin prose; but no such performance has ever appeared.

Pope lived at this time "among the great," with that reception and respect to which his works entitled him, and which he had not impaired by any private misconduct or factious partiality. Though Bolingbroke was his friend, Walpole was not his enemy; but treated him with so much consideration as, at his request, to solicit and obtain from the French minister an abbey for Mr. Southcot, whom he considered himself as obliged to reward, by this exertion of his interest, for the benefit which he had received from his attendance in a long illness.

It was said, that, when the court was at Richmond, queen Caroline had declared her intention to visit him. This may have been only a careless effusion, thought on no more: the report of such notice, however, was soon in many mouths; and, if I do not forget or misapprehend Savage's account, Pope, pretending to decline what was not yet offered, left his house for a time, not, I suppose, for any other reason than lest he should be thought to stay at home in expectation of an honour which would not be conferred. He was, therefore, angry at Swift, who represents him as "refusing the visits of a queen," because he knew that what had never been offered had never been refused.

Beside the general system of morality, supposed to be contained in the Essay on Man, it was his intention to write distinct poems upon the different duties or conditions of life; one of which is the

epistle to lord Bathurst, 1733, on the Use of Riches, a piece on which he declared great labour to have been bestowed[1].

Into this poem some incidents are historically thrown, and some known characters are introduced, with others of which it is difficult to say how far they are real or fictitious; but the praise of Kyrl, the man of Ross, deserves particular examination, who, after a long and pompous enumeration of his publick works and private charities, is said to have diffused all those blessings from "five hundred a year." Wonders are willingly told, and willingly heard. The truth is, that Kyrl was a man of known integrity and active benevolence, by whose solicitation the wealthy were persuaded to pay contributions to his charitable schemes; this influence he obtained by an example of liberality exerted to the utmost extent of his power, and was thus enabled to give more than he had. This account Mr. Victor received from the minister of the place: and I have preserved it, that the praise of a good man, being made more credible, may be more solid. Narrations of romantick and impracticable virtue will be read with wonder, but that which is unattainable is recommended in vain; that good may be endeavoured, it must be shown to be possible.

This is the only piece in which the author has given a hint of his religion, by ridiculing the ceremony of burning the pope, and by mentioning, with some indignation, the inscription on the monument.

[1] Spence.

When this poem was first published, the dialogue, having no letters of direction, was perplexed and obscure. Pope seems to have written with no very distinct idea; for he calls that an Epistle to Bathurst, in which Bathurst is introduced as speaking.

He afterwards, 1734, inscribed to lord Cobham his Characters of Men, written with close attention to the operations of the mind and modifications of life. In this poem he has endeavoured to establish and exemplify his favourite theory of the "ruling passion," by which he means an original direction of desire to some particular object; an innate affection, which gives all action a determinate and invariable tendency, and operates upon the whole system of life, either openly, or more secretly by the intervention of some accidental or subordinate propension.

Of any passion, thus innate and irresistible, the existence may reasonably be doubted. Human characters are by no means constant; men change by change of place, of fortune, of acquaintance; he who is at one time a lover of pleasure, is at another a lover of money. Those, indeed, who attain any excellence, commonly spend life in one pursuit: for excellence is not often gained upon easier terms. But to the particular species of excellence men are directed, not by an ascendant planet or predominating humour, but by the first book which they read, some early conversation which they heard, or some accident which excited ardour and emulation.

It must be, at least, allowed, that this "ruling passion," antecedent to reason and observation,

must have an object independent on human contrivance: for there can be no natural desire of artificial good. No man, therefore, can be born, in the strict acceptation, a lover of money; for he may be born where money does not exist: nor can he be born, in a moral sense, a lover of his country; for society, politically regulated, is a state contradistinguished from a state of nature; and any attention to that coalition of interests which makes the happiness of a country, is possible only to those whom inquiry and reflection have enabled to comprehend it.

This doctrine is, in itself, pernicious, as well as false; its tendency is to produce the belief of a kind of moral predestination, or overruling principle which cannot be resisted; he that admits it is prepared to comply with every desire that caprice or opportunity shall excite, and to flatter himself that he submits only to the lawful dominion of nature, in obeying the resistless authority of his "ruling passion[m]".

[m] It has been admitted by divines, even that some sins do more especially beset particular individuals. Mr. Roscoe enters into a long vindication of Pope's doctrine against the imputations of Dr. Johnson; the most satisfactory parts of which are the refutations drawn from Pope's own essay.

The business of reason is shown to be,
to rectify, not overthrow,
And treat this passion more as friend than foe.
Essay on Man, ep. ii. 164.

Th' eternal art, educing good from ill,
Grafts on this passion our best principle;
'Tis thus the mercury of man is fix'd:
Strong grows the virtue with his nature mix'd. Ib. ii. 175.

Pope has formed his theory with so little skill, that, in the examples by which he illustrates and confirms it, he has confounded passions, appetites, and habits.

To the Characters of Men, he added soon after, in an epistle supposed to have been addressed to Martha Blount, but which the last edition has taken from her, the Characters of Women. This poem, which was laboured with great diligence, and in the author's opinion with great success, was neglected at its first publication, as the commentator supposes, because the publick was informed, by an advertisement, that it contained "no character drawn from the life;" an assertion which Pope probably did not expect or wish to have been believed, and which he soon gave his readers sufficient reason to distrust, by telling them, in a note, that the work was imperfect, because part of his subject was "vice too high" to be yet exposed.

The time, however, soon came, in which it was safe to display the dutchess of Marlborough under the name of Atossa; and her character was inserted with no great honour to the writer's gratitude.

> As fruits, ungrateful to the planter's care,
> On savage stocks inserted learn to bear,
> The surest virtues thus from passion shoot,
> Wild nature's vigour working at the root,
> What crops of wit and honesty appear
> From spleen, from obstinacy, hate, or fear, &c. Ib. ii. 181.

"And thus," concludes Mr. Roscoe, "the injurious consequences which Johnson supposes to be derived from Pope's idea of the ruling passion, are not only obviated, but *that passion* itself is shown to be conducive to our highest moral improvement." Ed.

He published, from time to time, between 1730 and 1740, imitations of different poems of Horace, generally with his name, and once, as was suspected, without it. What he was upon moral principles ashamed to own, he ought to have suppressed. Of these pieces it is useless to settle the dates, as they had seldom much relation to the times, and, perhaps, had been long in his hands.

This mode of imitation, in which the ancients are familiarized, by adapting their sentiments to modern topicks, by making Horace say of Shakespeare what he originally said of Ennius, and accommodating his satires on Pantolabus and Nomentanus to the flatterers and prodigals of our own time, was first practised in the reign of Charles the second, by Oldham and Rochester, at least I remember no instances more ancient. It is a kind of middle composition between translation and original design, which pleases when the thoughts are unexpectedly applicable, and the parallels lucky. It seems to have been Pope's favourite amusement; for he has carried it farther than any former poet.

He published, likewise, a revival, in smoother numbers, of Dr. Donne's satires, which was recommended to him by the duke of Shrewsbury and the earl of Oxford. They made no great impression on the publick. Pope seems to have known their imbecility, and, therefore, suppressed them while he was yet contending to rise in reputation, but ventured them when he thought their deficiencies more likely to be imputed to Donne than to himself.

The epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot, which seems to be derived, in its first design, from Boileau's Address *à son Esprit*, was published in January, 1735, about a month before the death of him to whom it is inscribed. It is to be regretted, that either honour or pleasure should have been missed by Arbuthnot; a man estimable for his learning, amiable for his life, and venerable for his piety.

Arbuthnot was a man of great comprehension, skilful in his profession, versed in the sciences, acquainted with ancient literature, and able to animate his mass of knowledge by a bright and active imagination; a scholar with great brilliancy of wit; a wit, who, in the crowd of life, retained and discovered a noble ardour of religious zeal.

In this poem Pope seems to reckon with the publick. He vindicates himself from censures; and with dignity, rather than arrogance, enforces his own claims to kindness and respect.

Into this poem are interwoven several paragraphs which had been before printed as a fragment, and among them the satirical lines upon Addison, of which the last couplet has been twice corrected. It was at first,

> Who would not smile if such a man there be?
> Who would not laugh if Addison were he?

Then,

> Who would not grieve if such a man there be?
> Who would not laugh if Addison were he?

At last it is,

> Who but must laugh if such a man there be?
> Who would not weep if Atticus were he?

He was at this time at open war with lord Hervey, who had distinguished himself as a steady adherent to the ministry; and, being offended with a contemptuous answer to one of his pamphlets[n], had summoned Pulteney to a duel. Whether he or Pope made the first attack, perhaps, cannot now be easily known: he had written an invective against Pope, whom he calls, "Hard as thy heart, and as thy birth obscure;" and hints that his father was a *hatter*[o]. To this Pope wrote a reply in verse and prose; the verses are in this poem; and the prose, though it was never sent, is printed among his letters; but to a cool reader of the present time exhibits nothing but tedious malignity.

His last satires, of the general kind, were two dialogues, named, from the year in which they were published, Seventeen Hundred and Thirty-eight. In these poems many are praised, and many are reproached. Pope was then entangled in the opposition; a follower of the prince of Wales, who dined at his house, and the friend of many who obstructed and censured the conduct of the ministers. His political partiality was too plainly shown: he forgot the prudence with which he passed, in his earlier years, uninjured and unoffending, through much more violent conflicts of faction.

In the first dialogue, having an opportunity of praising Allen of Bath, he asked his leave to men-

[n] Entitled, Sedition and Defamation displayed. 8vo. 1733. R.

[o] Among many manuscripts, letters, &c. relating to Pope, which I have lately seen, is a lampoon in the bible style, of much humour, but irreverent, in which Pope is ridiculed as the son of a *hatter*.

tion him as a man not illustrious by any merit of his ancestors, and called him in his verses "low-born Allen." Men are seldom satisfied with praise introduced or followed by any mention of defect. Allen seems not to have taken any pleasure in his epithet, which was afterwards softened[p] into "humble Allen."

In the second dialogue he took some liberty with one of the Foxes, among others; which Fox, in a reply to Lyttelton, took an opportunity of repaying, by reproaching him with the friendship of a lampooner, who scattered his ink without fear or decency, and against whom he hoped the resentment of the legislature would quickly be discharged.

About this time Paul Whitehead, a small poet, was summoned before the lords for a poem called Manners, together with Dodsley, his publisher. Whitehead, who hung loose upon society, skulked and escaped; but Dodsley's shop and family made his appearance necessary. He was, however, soon dismissed; and the whole process was probably intended rather to intimidate Pope, than to punish Whitehead.

Pope never afterwards attempted to join the patriot with the poet, nor drew his pen upon statesmen. That he desisted from his attempts of reformation is imputed, by his commentator, to his despair of prevailing over the corruption of the

[p] On a hint from Warburton. There is, however, reason to think, from the appearance of the house in which Allen was born at Saint Blaise, that he was not of a *low*, but of a *decayed* family.

time. He was not likely to have been ever of opinion, that the dread of his satire would countervail the love of power or of money; he pleased himself with being important and formidable, and gratified sometimes his pride, and sometimes his resentment; till, at last, he began to think he should be more safe, if he were less busy.

The Memoirs of Scriblerus, published about this time, extend only to the first book of a work projected in concert by Pope, Swift, and Arbuthnot, who used to meet in the time of queen Anne, and denominated themselves the Scriblerus Club. Their purpose was to censure the abuses of learning by a fictitious life of an infatuated scholar. They were dispersed; the design was never completed; and Warburton laments its miscarriage, as an event very disastrous to polite letters.

If the whole may be estimated by this specimen, which seems to be the production of Arbuthnot, with a few touches, perhaps, by Pope, the want of more will not be much lamented; for the follies which the writer ridicules are so little practised, that they are not known; nor can the satire be understood but by the learned: he raises phantoms of absurdity, and then drives them away. He cures diseases that were never felt.

For this reason this joint production of three great writers has never obtained any notice from mankind; it has been little read, or when read has been forgotten, as no man could be wiser, better, or merrier, by remembering it.

The design cannot boast of much originality; for, besides its general resemblance to Don Quixote, there will be found in it particular imitations of the History of Mr. Ouffle.

Swift carried so much of it into Ireland as supplied him with hints for his travels; and with those the world might have been contented, though the rest had been suppressed.

Pope had sought for images and sentiments in a region not known to have been explored by many other of the English writers; he had consulted the modern writers of Latin poetry, a class of authors whom Boileau endeavoured to bring into contempt, and who are too generally neglected. Pope, however, was not ashamed of their acquaintance, nor ungrateful for the advantages which he might have derived from it. A small selection from the Italians, who wrote in Latin, had been published at London, about the latter end of the last century, by a man[q]

[q] Since discovered to have been Atterbury, afterwards bishop of Rochester. See the collection of that prelate's Epistolary Correspondence, vol. iv. p. 6. N.

This I believe to be an error. Mr. Nichols has ascribed this preface to Atterbury on the authority of Dr. Walter Harte, who, in a manuscript note on a copy of Pope's edition, expresses his surprise that Pope should there have described the former editor as anonymous, as he himself had told Harte fourteen years before his own publication, that this preface was by Atterbury. The explication is probably this; that during that period he had discovered that he had been in a mistake. By a manuscript note in a copy presented by Crynes to the Bodleian library, we are informed that the former editor was Thomas Power, of Trinity college, Cambridge. Power was bred at Westminster, under Busby, and was elected off to Cambridge in the year 1678. He was author of a translation of Milton's Paradise Lost; of which only the first book was published, in 1691. J. B.

who concealed his name, but whom his preface shows to have been well qualified for his undertaking. This collection Pope amplified by more than half, and, 1740, published it in two volumes, but injuriously omitted his predecessor's preface. To these books, which had nothing but the mere text, no regard was paid; the authors were still neglected, and the editor was neither praised nor censured.

He did not sink into idleness; he had planned a work, which he considered as subsequent to his Essay on Man, of which he has given this account to Dr. Swift:

"March 25, 1736.

"If ever I write any more epistles in verse, one of them shall be addressed to you. I have long concerted it, and begun it; but I would make what bears your name as finished as my last work ought to be, that is to say, more finished than any of the rest. The subject is large, and will divide into four epistles, which naturally follow the Essay on Man; viz. 1. Of the extent and limits of human reason and science. 2. A view of the useful, and, therefore, attainable, and of the unuseful, and, therefore, unattainable, arts. 3. Of the nature, ends, application, and use, of different capacities. 4. Of the use of learning, of the science of the world, and of wit. It will conclude with a satire against the misapplication of all these, exemplified by pictures, characters, and examples."

This work in its full extent, being now afflicted with an asthma, and finding the powers of life grad-

ually declining, he had no longer courage to undertake; but, from the materials which he had provided, he added, at Warburton's request, another book to the Dunciad, of which the design is to ridicule such studies as are either hopeless or useless, as either pursue what is unattainable, or what, if it be attained, is of no use.

When this book was printed, 1742, the laurel had been, for some time, upon the head of Cibber; a man whom it cannot be supposed that Pope could regard with much kindness or esteem, though, in one of the imitations of Horace, he has liberally enough praised the Careless Husband. In the Dunciad, among other worthless scribblers, he had mentioned Cibber; who, in his Apology, complains of the great poet's unkindness as more injurious, "because," says he, "I never have offended him."

It might have been expected, that Pope should have been, in some degree, mollified by this submissive gentleness, but no such consequence appeared. Though he condescended to commend Cibber once, he mentioned him afterwards contemptuously in one of his satires, and again in his epistle to Arbuthnot: and, in the fourth book of the Dunciad, attacked him with acrimony, to which the provocation is not easily discoverable. Perhaps he imagined, that, in ridiculing the laureate, he satirized those by whom the laurel had been given, and gratified that ambitious petulance, with which he affected to insult the great.

The severity of this satire left Cibber no longer

any patience. He had confidence enough in his own powers to believe, that he could disturb the quiet of his adversary, and, doubtless, did not want instigators, who, without any care about the victory, desired to amuse themselves by looking on the contest. He, therefore, gave the town a pamphlet, in which he declares his resolution, from that time, never to bear another blow without returning it, and to tire out his adversary by perseverance, if he cannot conquer him by strength.

The incessant and unappeasable malignity of Pope he imputes to a very distant cause. After the Three Hours after Marriage had been driven off the stage, by the offence which the mummy and crocodile gave the audience, while the exploded scene was yet fresh in memory, it happened that Cibber played Bayes in the Rehearsal; and, as it had been usual to enliven the part by the mention of any recent theatrical transactions, he said, that he once thought to have introduced his lovers disguised in a mummy and a crocodile. "This," says he, "was received with loud claps, which indicated contempt of the play." Pope, who was behind the scenes, meeting him as he left the stage, attacked him, as he says, with all the virulence of a "wit out of his senses;" to which he replied, "that he would take no other notice of what was said by so particular a man, than to declare, that, as often as he played that part, he would repeat the same provocation."

He shows his opinion to be, that Pope was one of the authors of the play which he so zealously de-

fended; and adds an idle story of Pope's behaviour at a tavern.

The pamphlet was written with little power of thought or language, and, if suffered to remain without notice, would have been very soon forgotten. Pope had now been enough acquainted with human life to know, if his passion had not been too powerful for his understanding, that, from a contention like his with Cibber, the world seeks nothing but diversion, which is given at the expense of the higher character. When Cibber lampooned Pope, curiosity was excited; what Pope would say of Cibber, nobody inquired, but in hope that Pope's asperity might betray his pain and lessen his dignity.

He should, therefore, have suffered the pamphlet to flutter and die, without confessing that it stung him. The dishonour of being shown as Cibber's antagonist could never be compensated by the victory. Cibber had nothing to lose; when Pope had exhausted all his malignity upon him, he would rise in the esteem both of his friends and his enemies. Silence only could have made him despicable; the blow which did not appear to be felt would have been struck in vain.

But Pope's irascibility prevailed, and he resolved to tell the whole English world that he was at war with Cibber; and, to show that he thought him no common adversary, he prepared no common vengeance; he published a new edition of the Dunciad[r], in which he degraded Theobald from his painful pre-

[r] In 1743.

eminence, and enthroned Cibber in his stead. Unhappily the two heroes were of opposite characters, and Pope was unwilling to lose what he had already written; he has, therefore, depraved his poem by giving to Cibber the old books, the cold pedantry, and the sluggish pertinacity of Theobald.

Pope was ignorant enough of his own interest, to make another change, and introduced Osborne contending for the prize among the booksellers. Osborne was a man entirely destitute of shame, without sense of any disgrace but that of poverty. He told me, when he was doing that which raised Pope's resentment, that he should be put into the Dunciad; but he had the fate of Cassandra. I gave no credit to his prediction, till, in time, I saw it accomplished. The shafts of satire were directed equally in vain against Cibber and Osborne; being repelled by the impenetrable impudence of one, and deadened by the impassive dulness of the other. Pope confessed his own pain by his anger; but he gave no pain to those who had provoked him. He was able to hurt none but himself; by transferring the same ridicule from one to another, he destroyed its efficacy; for by showing that what he had said of one he was ready to say of another, he reduced himself to the insignificance of his own magpie, who, from his cage, calls cuckold at a venture.

Cibber, according to his engagement, repaid the Dunciad with another pamphlet[8], which, Pope said, "would be as good as a dose of hartshorn to him;"

[8] In 1744.

but his tongue and his heart were at variance. I have heard Mr. Richardson relate, that he attended his father, the painter, on a visit, when one of Cibber's pamphlets came into the hands of Pope, who said, "these things are my diversion." They sat by him while he perused it, and saw his features writhing with anguish; and young Richardson said to his father, when they returned, that he hoped to be preserved from such diversion as had been that day the lot of Pope.

From this time, finding his diseases more oppressive, and his vital powers gradually declining, he no longer strained his faculties with any original composition, nor proposed any other employment for his remaining life than the revisal and correction of his former works; in which he received advice and assistance from Warburton, whom he appears to have trusted and honoured in the highest degree.

He laid aside his epick poem, perhaps without much loss to mankind; for his hero was Brutus the Trojan, who, according to a ridiculous fiction, established a colony in Britain. The subject, therefore, was of the fabulous age: the actors were a race upon whom imagination has been exhausted, and attention wearied, and to whom the mind will not easily be recalled, when it is invited in blank verse, which Pope had adopted with great imprudence, and, I think, without due consideration of the nature of our language. The sketch is, at least in part, preserved by Ruffhead; by which it appears that Pope was thoughtless enough to model the names

of his heroes with terminations not consistent with the time or country in which he places them.

He lingered through the next year; but perceived himself, as he expresses it, "going down the hill." He had, for at least five years, been afflicted with an asthma, and other disorders, which his physicians were unable to relieve. Towards the end of his life he consulted Dr. Thomson, a man who had, by large promises, and free censures of the common practice of physick, forced himself up into sudden reputation. Thomson declared his distemper to be a dropsy, and evacuated part of the water by tincture of jalap; but confessed that his belly did not subside. Thomson had many enemies, and Pope was persuaded to dismiss him.

While he was yet capable of amusement and conversation, as he was one day sitting in the air with lord Bolingbroke and lord Marchmont, he saw his favourite Martha Blount at the bottom of the terrace, and asked lord Bolingbroke to go and hand her up. Bolingbroke, not liking his errand, crossed his legs and sat still; but lord Marchmont, who was younger and less captious, waited on the lady, who, when he came to her, asked, "What, is he not dead yet[t]?" She is said to have neglected him, with shameful unkindness, in the latter time of his decay; yet, of the little which he had to leave she had a very great part. Their acquaintance began early; the life of each was pictured on the other's mind; their con-

[t]Mr. Roscoe, with good reason, doubts the accuracy of this inconsistent and improbable story. See his Life of Pope, 556.

versation, therefore, was endearing, for when they met, there was an immediate coalition of congenial notions. Perhaps he considered her unwillingness to approach the chamber of sickness as female weakness, or human frailty; perhaps he was conscious to himself of peevishness and impatience, or, though he was offended by her inattention, might yet consider her merit as overbalancing her fault; and if he had suffered his heart to be alienated from her, he could have found nothing that might fill her place; he could have only shrunk within himself; it was too late to transfer his confidence or fondness.

In May, 1744, his death was approaching[u]; on the 6th, he was all day delirious, which he mentioned four days afterwards as a sufficient humiliation of the vanity of man; he afterwards complained of seeing things as through a curtain, and in false colours; and one day, in the presence of Dodsley, asked what arm it was that came out from the wall. He said that his greatest inconvenience was inability to think.

Bolingbroke sometimes wept over him in this state of helpless decay; and being told by Spence, that Pope, at the intermission of his deliriousness, was always saying something kind either of his present or absent friends, and that his humanity seemed to have survived his understanding, answered, "It has so." And added, "I never in my life knew a man that had so tender a heart for his particular friends, or more general friendship for

[u] Spence.

mankind.'' At another time he said, "I have known Pope these thirty years, and value myself more in his friendship than''—His grief then suppressed his voice.

Pope expressed undoubting confidence of a future state. Being asked by his friend Mr. Hooke, a papist, whether he would not die like his father and mother, and whether a priest should not be called; he answered, "I do not think it essential, but it will be very right; and I thank you for putting me in mind of it.''

In the morning, after the priest had given him the last sacraments, he said, "There is nothing that is meritorious but virtue and friendship, and indeed friendship itself is only a part of virtue.''

He died in the evening of the thirtieth day of May, 1744, so placidly, that the attendants did not discern the exact time of his expiration. He was buried at Twickenham, near his father and mother, where a monument has been erected to him by his commentator, the bishop of Gloucester.

He left the care of his papers to his executors; first to lord Bolingbroke[v], and, if he should not be living, to the earl of Marchmont; undoubtedly expecting them to be proud of the trust, and eager to extend his fame. But let no man dream of influence beyond his life. After a decent time, Dodsley, the bookseller, went to solicit preference as the pub-

[v] This is somewhat inaccurately expressed. Lord Bolingbroke was not an executor: Pope's papers were left to him specifically, or, in case of his death, to lord Marchmont.

lisher, and was told that the parcel had not been yet inspected; and, whatever was the reason, the world has been disappointed of what was "reserved for the next age."

He lost, indeed, the favor of Bolingbroke, by a kind of posthumous offence. The political pamphlet, called the Patriot King, had been put into his hands that he might procure the impression of a very few copies, to be distributed, according to the author's direction, among his friends, and Pope assured him that no more had been printed than were allowed; but, soon after his death, the printer brought and resigned a complete edition of fifteen hundred copies, which Pope had ordered him to print, and to retain in secret. He kept, as was observed, his engagement to Pope, better than Pope had kept it to his friend; and nothing was known of the transaction, till, upon the death of his employer, he thought himself obliged to deliver the books to the right owner, who, with great indignation, made a fire in his yard, and delivered the whole impression to the flames.

Hitherto nothing had been done which was not naturally dictated by resentment of violated faith; resentment more acrimonious, as the violator had been more loved or more trusted. But here the anger might have stopped; the injury was private, and there was little danger from the example.

Bolingbroke, however, was not yet satisfied; his thirst of vengeance excited him to blast the memory of the man over whom he had wept in his last

struggles; and he employed Mallet, another friend of Pope, to tell the tale to the publick with all its aggravations. Warburton, whose heart was warm with his legacy, and tender by the recent separation, thought it proper for him to interpose; and undertook, not indeed to vindicate the action, for breach of trust has always something criminal, but to extenuate it by an apology. Having advanced what cannot be denied, that moral obliquity is made more or less excusable by the motives that produce it, he inquires what evil purpose could have induced Pope to break his promise. He could not delight his vanity by usurping the work, which, though not sold in shops, had been shown to a number more than sufficient to preserve the author's claim; he could not gratify his avarice, for he could not sell his plunder till Bolingbroke was dead: and even then, if the copy was left to another, his fraud would be defeated, and if left to himself, would be useless.

Warburton, therefore, supposes, with great appearance of reason, that the irregularity of his conduct proceeded wholly from his zeal for Bolingbroke, who might, perhaps, have destroyed the pamphlet, which Pope thought it his duty to preserve, even without its author's approbation. To this apology an answer was written in a letter to the most impudent Man living.

He brought some reproach upon his own memory by the petulant and contemptuous mention made in his will of Mr. Allen, and an affected repayment of his benefactions. Mrs. Blount, as the known friend

and favourite of Pope, had been invited to the house of Allen, where she comported herself with such indecent arrogance, that she parted from Mrs. Allen in a state of irreconcilable dislike, and the door was for ever barred against her. This exclusion she resented with so much bitterness as to refuse any legacy from Pope, unless he left the world with a disavowal of obligation to Allen. Having been long under her dominion, now tottering in the decline of life, and unable to resist the violence of her temper, or, perhaps, with a prejudice of a lover, persuaded that she had suffered improper treatment, he complied with her demand, and polluted his will with female resentment. Allen accepted the legacy, which he gave to the hospital at Bath, observing that Pope was always a bad accomptant, and that, if to 150*l.* he had put a cipher more, he had come nearer to the truth[w].

[w] This account of the difference between Pope and Mr. Allen is not so circumstantial as it was in Johnson's power to have made it. The particulars communicated to him concerning it he was too indolent to commit to writing; the business of this note is to supply his omissions.

Upon an invitation, in which Mrs. Blount was included, Mr. Pope made a visit to Mr. Allen, at Prior-park, and having occasion to go to Bristol for a few days, left Mrs. Blount behind him. In his absence Mrs. Blount, who was of the Romish persuasion, signified an inclination to go to the popish chapel at Bath, and desired of Mr. Allen the use of his chariot for the purpose; but he being at that time mayor of the city, suggested the impropriety of having his carriage seen at the door of a place of worship, to which, as a magistrate, he was at least restrained from giving a sanction, and might be required to suppress, and, therefore, desired to be excused. Mrs. Blount resented this refusal, and told Pope of it at his return, and so infected him with her rage that they both left the house abruptly[1].

[1] This is altogether wrong. Pope kept up his friendship with Mr. Allen to the last, as appears by his letters, and Mrs. Blount remained in Mr. Allen's house some time after the coolness took place between her and

The person of Pope is well known not to have been formed on the nicest model. He has, in his account of the Little Club, compared himself to a spider, and, by another, is described as protuberant behind and before. He is said to have been beautiful in his infancy; but he was of a constitution originally feeble and weak; and, as bodies of a tender frame are easily distorted, his deformity was, probably, in part the effect of his application. His stature was so low, that to bring him to a level with common tables, it was necessary to raise his seat. But his face was not displeasing, and his eyes were animated and vivid.

By natural deformity, or accidental distortion, his vital functions were so much disordered, that his life was a "long disease." His most frequent assailant was the headach, which he used to relieve by inhaling the steam of coffee, which he very frequently required.

Most of what can be told concerning his petty peculiarities was communicated by a female domes-

An instance of the like negligence may be noted in his relation of Pope's love of painting, which differs much from the information I gave him on that head. A picture of Betterton, certainly copied from Kneller by Pope[2], lord Mansfield once showed me at Kenwood-house, adding, that it was the only one he ever finished, for that the weakness of his eyes was an obstruction to his use of the pencil. H.

Mrs. Allen. Allen's conversation with Pope on this subject, and his letters to Mrs. Blount, all whose quarrels he was obliged to share, will be found in Mr. Bowles's edition of Pope's works. C.—See further and more minute information on this affair in Roscoe's Pope, i. 526, and following pages. Ed.

[2] See p. 249.

tick of the earl of Oxford, who knew him, perhaps, after the middle of life. He was then so weak as to stand in perpetual need of female attendance; extremely sensible of cold, so that he wore a kind of fur doublet, under a shirt of very coarse warm linen with fine sleeves. When he rose, he was invested in a bodice made of stiff canvass, being scarcely able to hold himself erect till they were laced, and he then put on a flannel waistcoat. One side was contracted. His legs were so slender, that he enlarged their bulk with three pair of stockings, which were drawn on and off by the maid; for he was not able to dress or undress himself, and neither went to bed nor rose without help. His weakness made it very difficult for him to be clean.

His hair had fallen almost all away; and he used to dine sometimes with lord Oxford, privately, in a velvet cap. His dress of ceremony was black, with a tie-wig and a little sword.

The indulgence and accommodation which his sickness required, had taught him all the unpleasing and unsocial qualities of a valetudinary man. He expected that every thing should give way to his ease or humour; as a child, whose parents will not hear her cry, has an unresisted dominion in the nursery:

> C'est que l'enfant toujours est homme;
> C'est que l'homme est toujours enfant.

When he wanted to sleep he "nodded in company;" and once slumbered at his own table while the prince of Wales was talking of poetry.

The reputation which his friendship gave pro-

cured him many invitations; but he was a very troublesome inmate. He brought no servant, and had so many wants that a numerous attendance was scarcely able to supply them. Wherever he was, he left no room for another, because he exacted the attention, and employed the activity of the whole family. His errands were so frequent and frivolous, that the footmen, in time, avoided and neglected him; and the earl of Oxford discharged some of the servants for their resolute refusal of his messages. The maids, when they had neglected their business, alleged that they had been employed by Mr. Pope.

One of his constant demands was of coffee in the night, and to the woman that waited on him in his chamber, he was very burdensome; but he was careful to recompense her want of sleep; and lord Oxford's servant declared, that in a house where her business was to answer his call, she would not ask for wages.

He had another fault easily incident to those who, suffering much pain, think themselves entitled to whatever pleasures they can snatch. He was too indulgent to his appetite: he loved meat highly seasoned and of strong taste; and at the intervals of the table amused himself with biscuits and dry conserves. If he sat down to a variety of dishes, he would oppress his stomach with repletion; and though he seemed angry when a dram was offered him, did not forbear to drink it. His friends, who knew the avenues to his heart, pampered him with presents of luxury, which he did not suffer to stand

neglected. The death of great men is not always proportioned to the lustre of their lives. Hannibal, says Juvenal, did not perish by the javelin or the sword; the slaughters of Cannæ were revenged by a ring. The death of Pope was imputed, by some of his friends, to a silver saucepan, in which it was his delight to heat potted lampreys.

That he loved too well to eat, is certain; but that his sensuality shortened his life, will not be hastily concluded, when it is remembered that a conformation so irregular lasted six-and-fifty years, notwithstanding such pertinacious diligence of study and meditation.

In all his intercourse with mankind, he had great delight in artifice, and endeavoured to attain all his purposes by indirect and unsuspected methods. "He hardly drank tea without a stratagem." If, at the house of his friends, he wanted any accommodation, he was not willing to ask for it in plain terms, but would mention it remotely as something convenient; though, when it was procured, he soon made it appear for whose sake it had been recommended. Thus he teased lord Orrery till he obtained a skreen. He practised his arts on such small occasions, that lady Bolingbroke used to say, in a French phrase, that "he played the politician about cabbages and turnips." His unjustifiable impression of the Patriot King, as it can be imputed to no particular motive, must have proceeded from his general habit of secrecy and cunning; he caught an

opportunity of a sly trick, and pleased himself with the thought of outwitting Bolingbroke[x].

In familiar or convivial conversation, it does not appear that he excelled. He may be said to have resembled Dryden, as being not one that was distinguished by vivacity in company. It is remarkable, that so near his time, so much should be known of what he has written, and so little of what he has said: traditional memory retains no sallies of raillery, nor sentences of observation; nothing either pointed or solid, either wise or merry. One apophthegm only stands upon record. When an objection, raised against his inscription for Shakespeare, was defended by the authority of Patrick, he replied, "horresco referens"—that "he would allow the publisher of a dictionary to know the meaning of a single word, but not of two words put together."

He was fretful and easily displeased, and allowed himself to be capriciously resentful. He would sometimes leave lord Oxford silently, no one could tell why, and was to be courted back by more letters and messages than the footmen were willing to carry. The table was, indeed, infested by lady Mary Wortley, who was the friend of lady Oxford, and who, knowing his peevishness, could by no entreaties be restained from contradicting him, till their disputes were sharpened to such asperity, that one or the other quitted the house.

[x] But see this matter explained by facts more creditable to Pope, in his life, Biographical Dictionary, vol. xxv.

He sometimes condescended to be jocular with servants or inferiours; but by no merriment, either of others or his own, was he ever seen excited to laughter.

Of his domestick character, frugality was a part eminently remarkable. Having determined not to be dependent, he determined not to be in want, and, therefore, wisely and magnanimously rejected all temptations to expense unsuitable to his fortune. This general care must be universally approved; but it sometimes appeared in petty artifices of parsimony, such as the practice of writing his compositions on the back of letters, as may be seen in the remaining copy of the Iliad, by which, perhaps, in five years five shillings were saved; or in a niggardly reception of his friends, and scantiness of entertainment, as, when he had two guests in his house, he would set at supper a single pint upon the table; and, having himself taken two small glasses, would retire, and say, "Gentlemen, I leave you to your wine." Yet he tells his friends, that "he has a heart for all, a house for all, and, whatever they may think, a fortune for all."

He sometimes, however, made a splendid dinner, and is said to have wanted no part of the skill or elegance which such performances require. That this magnificence should be often displayed, that obstinate prudence with which he conducted his affairs would not permit; for his revenue, certain and casual, amounted only to about eight hundred pounds a

year, of which, however, he declares himself able to assign one hundred to charity[y].

Of this fortune, which, as it arose from publick approbation, was very honourably obtained, his imagination seems to have been too full: it would be hard to find a man, so well entitled to notice by his wit, that ever delighted so much in talking of his money. In his letters, and in his poems, his garden and his grotto, his quincunx and his vines, or some hints of his opulence, are always to be found. The great topick of his ridicule is poverty; the crimes with which he reproaches his antagonists are their debts, their habitation in the Mint, and their want of a dinner. He seems to be of an opinion not very uncommon in the world, that to want money is to want every thing.

Next to the pleasure of contemplating his possessions, seems to be that of enumerating the men of high rank with whom he was acquainted, and whose notice he loudly proclaims not to have been obtained by any practices of meanness or servility; a boast which was never denied to be true, and to which very few poets have ever aspired. Pope never set his genius to sale, he never flattered those whom he did not love, or praised those whom he did not esteem. Savage, however, remarked, that he began a

[y] Part of it arose from an annuity of two hundred pounds a year, which he had purchased, of the late duke of Buckinghamshire, or the dutchess, his mother, and which was charged on some estate of that family. [See p. 216.] The deed by which it was granted was some years in my custody. H.

little to relax his dignity when he wrote a distich for his Highness's dog.

His admiration of the great seems to have increased in the advance of life. He passed over peers and statesmen, to inscribe his Iliad to Congreve, with a magnanimity of which the praise had been complete, had his friend's virtue been equal to his wit. Why he was chosen for so great an honour, it is not now possible to know; there is no trace in literary history of any particular intimacy between them. The name of Congreve appears in the letters among those of his other friends, but without any observable distinction or consequence.

To his latter works, however, he took care to annex names dignified with titles, but was not very happy in his choice; for, except lord Bathurst, none of his noble friends were such as that a good man would wish to have his intimacy with them known to posterity; he can derive little honour from the notice of Cobham, Burlington, or Bolingbroke.

Of his social qualities, if an estimate be made from his letters, an opinion too favourable cannot easily be formed; they exhibit a perpetual and unclouded effulgence of general benevolence and particular fondness. There is nothing but liberality, gratitude, constancy, and tenderness. It has been so long said as to be commonly believed, that the true characters of men may be found in their letters, and that he who writes to his friend, lays his heart open before him. But the truth is, that such were the simple friendships of the Golden Age, and are now the

friendships only of children. Very few can boast of hearts which they dare lay open to themselves, and of which, by whatever accident exposed, they do not shun a distinct and continued view; and, certainly, what we hide from ourselves we do not show to our friends. There is, indeed, no transaction which offers stronger temptations to fallacy and sophistication than epistolary intercourse. In the eagerness of conversation, the first emotions of the mind often burst out before they are considered; in the tumult of business, interest and passion have their genuine effect; but a friendly letter is a calm and deliberate performance in the cool of leisure, in the stillness of solitude, and surely no man sits down to depreciate by design his own character.

Friendship has no tendency to secure veracity; for by whom can a man so much wish to be thought better than he is, as by him whose kindness he desires to gain or keep? Even in writing to the world there is less constraint; the author is not confronted with his reader, and takes his chance of approbation among the different dispositions of mankind; but a letter is addressed to a single mind, of which the prejudices and partialities are known; and must, therefore, please, if not by favouring them, by forbearing to oppose them.

To charge those favourable representations which men give of their own minds with the guilt of hypocritical falsehood, would show more severity than knowledge. The writer commonly believes himself. Almost every man's thoughts, while they are gen-

eral, are right; and most hearts are pure while temptation is away. It is easy to awaken generous sentiments in privacy; to despise death when there is no danger; to glow with benevolence when there is nothing to be given. While such ideas are formed, they are felt; and self-love does not suspect the gleam of virtue to be the meteor of fancy.

If the letters of Pope are considered merely as compositions, they seem to be premeditated and artificial. It is one thing to write, because there is something which the mind wishes to discharge; and another to solicit the imagination, because ceremony or vanity requires something to be written. Pope confesses his early letters to be vitiated with "affectation and ambition:" to know whether he disentangled himself from these perverters of epistolary integrity, his book and his life must be set in comparison.

One of his favourite topicks is contempt of his own poetry. For this, if it had been real, he would deserve no commendation; and in this he was certainly not sincere, for his high value of himself was sufficiently observed; and of what could he be proud but of his poetry? He writes, he says, when "he has just nothing else to do;" yet Swift complains that he was never at leisure for conversation, because he had "always some poetical scheme in his head." It was punctually required that his writing-box should be set upon his bed before he rose; and lord Oxford's domestick related, that, in the dreadful winter of forty, she was called from her bed by him four times

in one night, to supply him with paper, lest he should lose a thought.

He pretends insensibility to censure and criticism, though it was observed, by all who knew him, that every pamphlet disturbed his quiet, and that his extreme irritability laid him open to perpetual vexation; but he wished to despise his criticks, and, therefore, hoped that he did despise them.

As he happened to live in two reigns when the court paid little attention to poetry, he nursed in his mind a foolish disesteem of kings, and proclaims that "he never sees courts." Yet a little regard shown him by the prince of Wales melted his obduracy; and he had not much to say when he was asked by his royal highness, "How he could love a prince while he disliked kings."

He very frequently professes contempt of the world, and represents himself as looking on mankind, sometimes with gay indifference, as on emmets of a hillock, below his serious attention; and sometimes with gloomy indignation, as on monsters more worthy of hatred than of pity. These were dispositions apparently counterfeited. How could he despise those whom he lived by pleasing, and on whose approbation his esteem of himself was superstructed? Why should he hate those to whose favour he owed his honour and his ease? Of things that terminate in human life, the world is the proper judge; to despise its sentence, if it were possible, is not just; and if it were just, is not possible. Pope was far enough from this unreasonable temper: he

was sufficiently "a fool to fame," and his fault was, that he pretended to neglect it. His levity and his sullenness were only in his letters; he passed through common life, sometimes vexed, and sometimes pleased, with the natural emotions of common men.

His scorn of the great is too often repeated to be real; no man thinks much of that which he despises; and, as falsehood is always in danger of inconsistency, he makes it his boast, at another time, that he lives among them.

It is evident that his own importance swells often in his mind. He is afraid of writing, lest the clerks of the postoffice should know his secrets; he has many enemies; he considers himself as surrounded by universal jealousy: "after many deaths, and many dispersions, two or three of us" says he, "may still be brought together, not to plot, but to divert ourselves, and the world too, if it pleases:" and they can live together, and "show what friends wits may be, in spite of all the fools in the world." All this while it was likely that the clerks did not know his hand; he certainly had no more enemies than a publick character like his inevitably excites; and with what degree of friendship the wits might live, very few were so much fools as ever to inquire.

Some part of this pretended discontent he learned from Swift, and expresses it, I think, most frequently in his correspondence with him. Swift's resentment was unreasonable, but it was sincere; Pope's was the mere mimickry of his friend, a fictitious part which he began to play before it became him. When

he was only twenty-five years old, he related that "a glut of study and retirement had thrown him on the world," and that there was danger lest "a glut of the world should throw him back upon study and retirement." To this Swift answered with great propriety, that Pope had not yet either acted or suffered enough in the world to have become weary of it. And, indeed, it must be some very powerful reason that can drive back to solitude him who has once enjoyed the pleasures of society.

In the letters, both of Swift and Pope, there appears such narrowness of mind, as makes them insensible of any excellence that has not some affinity with their own, and confines their esteem and approbation to so small a number, that whoever should form his opinion of the age from their representation, would suppose them to have lived amidst ignorance and barbarity, unable to find, among their contemporaries, either virtue or intelligence, and persecuted by those that could not understand them.

When Pope murmurs at the world, when he professes contempt of fame, when he speaks of riches and poverty, of success and disappointment, with negligent indifference, he certainly does not express his habitual and settled sentiments, but either wilfully disguises his own character, or, what is more likely, invests himself with temporary qualities, and sallies out in the colours of the present moment. His hopes and fears, his joys and sorrows, acted strongly upon his mind; and, if he differed from

others, it was not by carelessness; he was irritable and resentful; his malignity to Philips, whom he had first made ridiculous, and then hated for being angry, continued too long. Of his vain desire to make Bentley contemptible, I never heard any adequate reason. He was sometimes wanton in his attacks; and, before Chandos, lady Wortley, and Hill, was mean in his retreat.

The virtues which seem to have had most of his affection were liberality and fidelity of friendship, in which it does not appear that he was other than he describes himself. His fortune did not suffer his charity to be splendid and conspicuous; but he assisted Dodsley with a hundred pounds, that he might open a shop; and, of the subscription of forty pounds a year, that he raised for Savage, twenty were paid by himself. He was accused of loving money; but his love was eagerness to gain, not solicitude to keep it.

In the duties of friendship he was zealous and constant; his early maturity of mind commonly united him with men older than himself, and, therefore, without attaining any considerable length of life, he saw many companions of his youth sink into the grave; but it does not appear that he lost a single friend by coldness or by injury; those who loved him once, continued their kindness. His ungrateful mention of Allen, in his will, was the effect of his adherence to one whom he had known much longer, and whom he naturally loved with greater fondness. His violation of the trust reposed in him

by Bolingbroke, could have no motive inconsistent with the warmest affection; he either thought the action so near to indifferent that he forgot it, or so laudable, that he expected his friend to approve it.

It was reported, with such confidence as almost to enforce belief, that in the papers intrusted to his executors was found a defamatory life of Swift, which he had prepared as an instrument of vengeance, to be used if any provocation should be ever given. About this I inquired of the earl of Marchmont, who assured me, that no such piece was among his remains.

The religion in which he lived and died was that of the church of Rome, to which, in his correspondence with Racine, he professes himself a sincere adherent. That he was not scrupulously pious in some part of his life, is known by many idle and indecent applications of sentences taken from the scriptures; a mode of merriment which a good man dreads for its profaneness, and a witty man disdains for its easiness and vulgarity. But to whatever levities he has been betrayed, it does not appear that his principles were ever corrupted, or that he ever lost his belief of revelation. The positions, which he transmitted from Bolingbroke, he seems not to have understood; and was pleased with an interpretation, that made them orthodox.

A man of such exalted superiority, and so little moderation, would naturally have all his delinquencies observed and aggravated; those who could not

deny that he was excellent, would rejoice to find that he was not perfect.

Perhaps it may be imputed to the unwillingness with which the same man is allowed to possess many advantages, that his learning has been depreciated. He certainly was, in his early life, a man of great literary curiosity; and, when he wrote his Essay on Criticism, had, for his age, a very wide acquaintance with books. When he entered into the living world, it seems to have happened to him, as to many others, that he was less attentive to dead masters; he studied in the academy of Paracelsus, and made the universe his favourite volume. He gathered his notions fresh from reality, not from the copies of authors, but the originals of nature. Yet, there is no reason to believe, that literature ever lost his esteem; he always professed to love reading; and Dobson, who spent some time at his house, translating his Essay on Man, when I asked him what learning he found him to possess, answered, "More than I expected." His frequent references to history, his allusions to various kinds of knowledge, and his images, selected from art and nature, with his observations on the operations of the mind, and the modes of life, show an intelligence perpetually on the wing, excursive, vigorous, and diligent, eager to pursue knowledge, and attentive to retain it.

From this curiosity arose the desire of travelling, to which he alludes in his verses to Jervas; and

which, though he never found an opportunity to gratify it, did not leave him till his life declined.

Of his intellectual character, the constituent and fundamental principle was good sense, a prompt and intuitive perception of consonance and propriety. He saw immediately, of his own conceptions, what was to be chosen, and what to be rejected; and, in the works of others, what was to be shunned, and what was to be copied.

But good sense alone is a sedate and quiescent quality, which manages its possessions well, but does not increase them; it collects few materials for its own operations, and preserves safety, but never gains supremacy. Pope had, likewise, genius; a mind active, ambitious, and adventurous, always investigating, always aspiring; in its widest searches still longing to go forward, in its highest flights still wishing to be higher; always imagining something greater than it knows, always endeavouring more than it can do.

To assist these powers, he is said to have had great strength and exactness of memory. That which he had heard or read was not easily lost; and he had before him not only what his own meditation suggested, but what he had found in other writers that might be accommodated to his present purpose.

These benefits of nature he improved by incessant and unwearied diligence; he had recourse to every source of intelligence, and lost no opportunity of information; he consulted the living as well as the

dead; he read his compositions to his friends, and was never content with mediocrity, when excellence could be attained. He considered poetry as the business of his life; and, however he might seem to lament his occupation, he followed it with constancy; to make verses was his first labour, and to mend them was his last.

From his attention to poetry he was never diverted. If conversation offered any thing that could be improved, he committed it to paper; if a thought, or, perhaps, an expression more happy than was common, rose to his mind, he was careful to write it; an independent distich was preserved for an opportunity of insertion, and some little fragments have been found containing lines, or parts of lines, to be wrought upon at some other time.

He was one of those few whose labour is their pleasure: he was never elevated to negligence, nor wearied to impatience; he never passed a fault unamended by indifference, nor quitted it by despair. He laboured his works, first to gain reputation, and afterwards to keep it.

Of composition there are different methods. Some employ at once memory and invention, and, with little intermediate use of the pen, form and polish large masses by continued meditation, and write their productions only when, in their own opinion, they have completed them. It is related of Virgil, that his custom was to pour out a great number of verses in the morning, and pass the day in retrenching exuberances and correcting inaccuracies. The

method of Pope, as may be collected from his translation, was to write his first thoughts in his first words, and gradually to amplify, decorate, rectify, and refine them.

With such faculties, and such dispositions, he excelled every other writer in poetical prudence: he wrote in such a manner as might expose him to few hazards. He used almost always the same fabrick of verse; and, indeed, by those few essays which he made of any other, he did not enlarge his reputation. Of this uniformity the certain consequence was readiness and dexterity. By perpetual practice, language had, in his mind, a systematical arrangement; having always the same use for words, he had words so selected and combined as to be ready at his call. This increase of facility he confessed himself to have perceived in the progress of his translation.

But what was yet of more importance, his effusions were always voluntary, and his subjects chosen by himself. His independence secured him from drudging at a task, and labouring upon a barren topick: he never exchanged praise for money, nor opened a shop of condolence or congratulation. His poems, therefore, were scarcely ever temporary. He suffered coronations and royal marriages to pass without a song; and derived no opportunities from recent events, nor any popularity from the accidental disposition of his readers. He was never reduced to the necessity of soliciting the sun to shine upon a birthday, of calling the graces and virtues to a wedding, or of saying what multitudes have said before

him. When he could produce nothing new, he was at liberty to be silent.

His publications were, for the same reason, never hasty. He is said to have sent nothing to the press till it had lain two years under his inspection: it is at least certain, that he ventured nothing without nice examination. He suffered the tumult of imagination to subside, and the novelties of invention to grow familiar. He knew that the mind is always enamoured of its own productions, and did not trust his first fondness. He consulted his friends, and listened with great willingness to criticism; and, what was of more importance, he consulted himself, and let nothing pass against his own judgment.

He professed to have learned his poetry from Dryden, whom, whenever an opportunity was presented, he praised through his whole life with unvaried liberality; and, perhaps, his character may receive some illustration, if he be compared with his master.

Integrity of understanding, and nicety of discernment, were not allotted in a less proportion to Dryden than to Pope. The rectitude of Dryden's mind was sufficiently shown by the dismission of his poetical prejudices, and the rejection of unnatural thoughts and rugged numbers. But Dryden never desired to apply all the judgment that he had. He wrote, and professed to write, merely for the people; and when he pleased others, he contented himself. He spent no time in struggles to rouse latent powers; he never attempted to make that better which was already good, nor often to mend what he must have

known to be faulty. He wrote, as he tells us, with very little consideration; when occasion or necessity called upon him, he poured out what the present moment happened to supply, and, when once it had passed the press, ejected it from his mind; for, when he had no pecuniary interest, he had no further solicitude.

Pope was not content to satisfy; he desired to excel, and, therefore, always endeavoured to do his best: he did not court the candour, but dared the judgment of his reader, and, expecting no indulgence from others, he showed none to himself. He examined lines and words with minute and punctilious observation, and retouched every part with indefatigable diligence, till he had left nothing to be forgiven.

For this reason he kept his pieces very long in his hands, while he considered and reconsidered them. The only poems which can be supposed to have been written with such regard to the times as might hasten their publication, were the two satires of Thirty-eight; of which Dodsley told me, that they were brought to him by the author, that they might be fairly copied. "Almost every line," he said, "was then written twice over; I gave him a clean transcript, which he sent some time afterwards to me for the press, with almost every line written twice over a second time.

His declaration, that his care for his works ceased at their publication, was not strictly true. His parental attention never abandoned them; what he

found amiss in the first edition, he silently corrected in those that followed. He appears to have revised the Iliad, and freed it from some of its imperfections; and the Essay on Criticism received many improvements after its first appearance. It will seldom be found that he altered, without adding clearness, elegance, or vigour. Pope had, perhaps, the judgment of Dryden; but Dryden certainly wanted the diligence of Pope.

In acquired knowledge, the superiority must be allowed to Dryden, whose education was more scholastick, and who, before he became an author, had been allowed more time for study, with better means of information. His mind has a larger range, and he collects his images and illustrations from a more extensive circumference of science. Dryden knew more of man in his general nature, and Pope in his local manners. The notions of Dryden were formed by comprehensive speculation, and those of Pope by minute attention. There is more dignity in the knowledge of Dryden, and more certainty in that of Pope.

Poetry was not the sole praise of either: for both excelled likewise in prose; but Pope did not borrow his prose from his predecessor. The style of Dryden is capricious and varied; that of Pope is cautious and uniform. Dryden obeys the motions of his own mind; Pope constrains his mind to his own rules of composition. Dryden is sometimes vehement and rapid; Pope is always smooth, uniform, and gentle. Dryden's page is a natural field, rising into inequal-

ities, and diversified by the varied exuberance of abundant vegetation; Pope's is a velvet lawn, shaven by the sithe, and levelled by the roller.

Of genius, that power which constitutes a poet; that quality without which judgment is cold, and knowledge is inert; that energy which collects, combines, amplifies, and animates; the superiority must, with some hesitation, be allowed to Dryden. It is not to be inferred, that of this poetical vigour Pope had only a little, because Dryden had more; for every other writer since Milton must give place to Pope; and even of Dryden it must be said, that, if he has brighter paragraphs, he has not better poems. Dryden's performances were always hasty, either excited by some external occasion, or extorted by domestick necessity; he composed without consideration, and published without correction. What his mind could supply at call, or gather in one excursion, was all that he sought, and all that he gave. The dilatory caution of Pope enabled him to condense his sentiments, to multiply his images, and to accumulate all that study might produce, or chance might supply. If the flights of Dryden, therefore, are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing. If of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope's the heat is more regular and constant. Dryden often surpasses expectation, and Pope never falls below it. Dryden is read with frequent astonishment, and Pope with perpetual delight.

This parallel will, I hope, when it is well considered, be found just; and, if the reader should sus-

pect me, as I suspect myself, of some partial fondness for the memory of Dryden, let him not too hastily condemn me; for meditation and inquiry, may, perhaps, show him the reasonableness of my determination.

The works of Pope are now to be distinctly examined, not so much with attention to slight faults, or petty beauties, as to the general character and effect of each performance.

It seems natural for a young poet to initiate himself by pastorals, which, not professing to imitate real life, require no experience; and, exhibiting only the simple operation of unmingled passions, admit no subtle reasoning or deep inquiry. Pope's pastorals are not, however, composed but with close thought; they have reference to the times of the day, the seasons of the year, and the periods of human life. The last, that which turns the attention upon age and death, was the author's favorite. To tell of disappointment and misery, to thicken the darkness of futurity, and perplex the labyrinth of uncertainty, has been always a delicious employment of the poets. His preference was probably just. I wish, however, that his fondness had not overlooked a line in which the zephyrs are made "to lament in silence."

To charge these pastorals with want of invention, is to require what was never intended. The imitations are so ambitiously frequent, that the writer evidently means rather to show his literature, than

his wit. It is surely sufficient for an author of sixteen, not only to be able to copy the poems of antiquity with judicious selection, but to have obtained sufficient power of language, and skill in metre, to exhibit a series of versification, which had in English poetry no precedent, nor has since had an imitation.

The design of Windsor Forest is evidently derived from Cooper's Hill, with some attention to Waller's poem on the Park; but Pope cannot be denied to excel his masters in variety and elegance, and the art of interchanging description, narrative, and morality. The objection made by Dennis is the want of plan, of a regular subordination of parts terminating in the principal and original design. There is this want in most descriptive poems, because, as the scenes, which they must exhibit successively, are all subsisting at the same time, the order in which they are shown must by necessity be arbitrary, and more is not to be expected from the last part than from the first. The attention, therefore, which cannot be detained by suspense, must be excited by diversity, such as his poem offers to its reader.

But the desire of diversity may be too much indulged; the parts of Windsor Forest which deserve least praise, are those which were added to enliven the stillness of the scene, the appearance of Father Thames, and the transformation of Lodona. Addison had in his Campaign derided the rivers that "rise from their oozy beds" to tell stories of heroes; and

it is, therefore, strange that Pope should adopt a fiction not only unnatural but lately censured. The story of Lodona is told with sweetness; but a new metamorphosis is a ready and puerile expedient; nothing is easier than to tell how a flower was once a blooming virgin, or a rock an obdurate tyrant.

The Temple of Fame has, as Steele warmly declared, "a thousand beauties." Every part is splendid; there is great luxuriance of ornaments; the original vision of Chaucer was never denied to be much improved; the allegory is very skilfully continued, the imagery is properly selected, and learnedly displayed; yet, with all this comprehension of excellence, as its scene is laid in remote ages, and its sentiments, if the concluding paragraph be excepted, have little relation to general manners or common life, it never obtained much notice, but is turned silently over, and seldom quoted or mentioned with either praise or blame.

That the Messiah excels the Pollio, is no great praise, if it be considered from what original the improvements are derived.

The Verses on the unfortunate Lady have drawn much attention by the illaudable singularity of treating suicide with respect; and they must be allowed to be written, in some parts, with vigorous animation, and, in others, with gentle tenderness; nor has Pope produced any poem in which the sense predominates more over the diction. But the tale is not skilfully told; it is not easy to discover the character of either the lady or her guardian. History

relates that she was about to disparage herself by a marriage with an inferiour; Pope praises her for the dignity of ambition, and yet condemns the uncle to detestation for his pride; the ambitious love of a niece may be opposed by the interest, malice, or envy of an uncle, but never by his pride. On such an occasion a poet may be allowed to be obscure, but inconsistency never can be right[z].

The Ode for St. Cecilia's Day was undertaken at the desire of Steele: in this the author is generally confessed to have miscarried, yet he has miscarried only as compared with Dryden; for he has far outgone other competitors. Dryden's plan is better chosen; history will always take stronger hold of the attention than fable: the passions excited by Dryden are the pleasures and pains of real life, the scene of Pope is laid in imaginary existence; Pope is read with calm acquiescence, Dryden with turbulent delight; Pope hangs upon the ear, and Dryden finds the passes of the mind.

Both the odes want the essential constituent of

[z] The account herein before given of this lady and her catastrophe, cited by Johnson from Ruffhead, with a kind of acquiesence in the truth thereof, seems no other than might have been extracted from the verses themselves. I have in my possession a letter to Dr. Johnson, containing the name of the lady; and a reference to a gentleman well known in the literary world for her history. Him I have seen; and, from a memorandum of some particulars to the purpose, communicated to him by a lady of quality, he informs me, that the unfortunate lady's name was Withinbury[1], corruptly pronounced Winbury; that she was in love with Pope, and would have married him; that her guardian, though she was deformed in person, looking upon such a match as beneath her, sent her to a convent, and that a noose, and not a sword, put an end to her life. H.

[1] According to Warton, the lady's name was Wainsbury. Ed.

metrical compositions, the stated recurrence of settled numbers. It may be alleged that Pindar is said by Horace to have written "numeris lege solutis:" but as no such lax performances have been transmitted to us, the meaning of that expression cannot be fixed; and, perhaps, the like return might properly be made to a modern Pindarist, as Mr. Cobb received from Bentley, who, when he found his criticisms upon a Greek exercise, which Cobb had presented, refuted one after another by Pindar's authority, cried out, at last, "Pindar was a bold fellow, but thou art an impudent one."

If Pope's ode be particularly inspected, it will be found that the first stanza consists of sounds well chosen indeed, but only sounds.

The second consists of hyperbolical commonplaces, easily to be found, and, perhaps, without much difficulty to be as well expressed.

In the third, however, there are numbers, images, harmony, and vigour, not unworthy the antagonist of Dryden. Had all been like this—but every part cannot be the best.

The next stanzas place and detain us in the dark and dismal regions of mythology, where neither hope nor fear, neither joy nor sorrow, can be found: the poet, however, faithfully attends us: we have all that can be performed by elegance of diction, or sweetness of versification; but what can form avail wthout better matter?

The last stanza recurs again to commonplaces. The conclusion is too evidently modelled by that of

Dryden; and it may be remarked that both end with the same fault: the comparison of each is literal on one side, and metaphorical on the other.

Poets do not always express their own thoughts; Pope, with all this labour in the praise of musick, was ignorant of its principles, and insensible of its effects.

One of his greatest, though of his earliest works, is the Essay on Criticism, which, if he had written nothing else, would have placed him among the first criticks and the first poets, as it exhibits every mode of excellence that can embellish or dignify didactick composition, selection of matter, novelty of arrangement, justness of precept, splendour of illustration, and propriety of digression. I know not whether it be pleasing to consider that he produced this piece at twenty, and never afterwards excelled it: he that delights himself with observing that such powers may be so soon attained, cannot but grieve to think that life was ever after at a stand.

To mention the particular beauties of the essay would be unprofitably tedious; but I cannot forbear to observe, that the comparison of a student's progress in the sciences with the journey of a traveller in the Alps, is, perhaps, the best that English poetry can show. A simile, to be perfect, must both illustrate and ennoble the subject; must show it to the understanding in a clearer view, and display it to the fancy with greater dignity; but either of these qualities may be sufficient to recommend it. In didactick poetry, of which the great purpose is in-

struction, a simile may be praised which illustrates, though it does not ennoble; in heroicks, that may be admitted which ennobles, though it does not illustrate. That it may be complete, it is required to exhibit, independently of its references, a pleasing image; for a simile is said to be a short episode. To this antiquity was so attentive, that circumstances were sometimes added, which, having no parallels, served only to fill the imagination, and produced what Perrault ludicrously called "comparisons with a long tail." In their similes the greatest writers have sometimes failed; the ship-race, compared with the chariot-race, is neither illustrated nor aggrandized; land and water make all the difference: when Apollo, running after Daphne, is likened to a greyhound chasing a hare, there is nothing gained; the ideas of pursuit and flight are too plain to be made plainer, and a god and the daughter of a god are not represented much to their advantage by a hare and dog. The simile of the Alps has no useless parts, yet affords a striking picture by itself; it makes the foregoing position better understood, and enables it to take faster hold on the attention; it assists the apprehension, and elevates the fancy.

Let me, likewise, dwell a little on the celebrated paragraph, in which it is directed that "the sound should seem an echo to the sense;" a precept which Pope is allowed to have observed beyond any other English poet.

This notion of representative metre, and the desire of discovering frequent adaptations of the sound to

the sense, have produced, in my opinion, many wild conceits and imaginary beauties. All that can furnish this representation are the sounds of the words considered singly, and the time in which they are pronounced. Every language has some words framed to exhibit the noises which they express, as *thump*, *rattle*, *growl*, *hiss*. These, however, are but few, and the poet cannot make them more, nor can they be of any use but when sound is to be mentioned. The time of pronunciation was, in the dactylick measures of the learned languages, capable of considerable variety; but that variety could be accommodated only to motion or duration, and different degrees of motion were, perhaps, expressed by verses rapid or slow, without much attention of the writer, when the image had full possession of his fancy; but our language having little flexibility, our verses can differ very little in their cadence. The fancied resemblances, I fear, arise sometimes merely from the ambiguity of words; there is supposed to be some relation between a *soft* line and a *soft* couch, or between *hard* syllables and *hard* fortune.

Motion, however, may be in some sort exemplified; and yet it may be suspected that even in such resemblances the mind often governs the ear, and the sounds are estimated by their meaning. One of the most successful attempts has been to describe the labour of Sisyphus:

> With many a weary step, and many a groan,
> Up a high hill he heaves a huge round stone;
> The huge round stone, resulting with a bound,
> Thunders impetuous down, and smokes along the ground.

Who does not perceive the stone to move slowly upward, and roll violently back? But set the same numbers to another sense:

> While many a merry tale, and many a song,
> Cheer'd the rough road, we wish'd the rough road long.
> The rough road then, returning in a round,
> Mock'd our impatient steps, for all was fairy ground.

We have now, surely, lost much of the delay, and much of the rapidity.

But, to show how little the greatest master of numbers can fix the principles of representative harmony, it will be sufficient to remark that the poet, who tells us, that

> When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,
> The line too labours, and the words move slow:
> Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,
> Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and skims along the main;

when he had enjoyed, for about thirty years, the praise of Camilla's lightness of foot, tried another experiment upon *sound* and *time*, and produced this memorable triplet:

> Waller was smooth; but Dryden taught to join
> The varying verse, the full resounding line,
> The long majestick march, and energy divine.

Here are the swiftness of the rapid race, and the march of slow-paced majesty, exhibited by the same poet in the same sequence of syllables, except that the exact prosodist will find the line of *swiftness* by one time longer than that of *tardiness*.

Beauties of this kind are commonly fancied; and, when real, are technical and nugatory, not to be rejected, and not to be solicited.

To the praises which have been accumulated on the Rape of the Lock by readers of every class, from the critick to the waiting-maid, it is difficult to make any addition. Of that which is universally allowed to be the most attractive of all ludicrous compositions, let it rather be now inquired from what sources the power of pleasing is derived.

Dr. Warburton, who excelled in critical perspicacity, has remarked that the preternatural agents are very happily adapted to the purposes of the poem. The heathen deities can no longer gain attention: we should have turned away from a contest between Venus and Diana. The employment of allegorical persons always excites conviction of its own absurdity; they may produce effects, but cannot conduct actions; when the phantom is put in motion, it dissolves; thus Discord may raise a mutiny, but Discord cannot conduct a march, or besiege a town. Pope brought into view a new race of beings, with powers and passions proportionate to their operation. The sylphs and gnomes act, at the toilet and the tea-table, what more terrifick and more powerful phantoms perform on the stormy ocean, or the field of battle; they give their proper help, and do their proper mischief.

Pope is said, by an objector, not to have been the inventer of this petty nation; a charge which might, with more justice, have been brought against the author of the Iliad, who, doubtless, adopted the religious system of his country; for what is there, but the names of his agents, which Pope has not invented?

Has he not assigned them characters and operations never heard of before? Has he not, at least, given them their first poetical existence? If this is not sufficient to denominate his work original, nothing original ever can be written.

In this work are exhibited, in a very high degree, the two most engaging powers of an author. New things are made familiar, and familiar things are made new. A race of aerial people, never heard of before, is presented to us in a manner so clear and easy, that the reader seeks for no further information, but immediately mingles with his new acquaintance, adopts their interests, and attends their pursuits, loves a sylph, and detests a gnome.

That familiar things are made new, every paragraph will prove. The subject of the poem is an event below the common incidents of common life; nothing real is introduced that is not seen so often as to be no longer regarded; yet the whole detail of a female day is here brought before us invested with so much art of decoration, that, though nothing is disguised, every thing is striking, and we feel all the appetite of curiosity for that from which we have a thousand times turned fastidiously away.

The purpose of the poet is, as he tells us, to laugh at "the little unguarded follies of the female sex." It is, therefore, without justice that Dennis charges the Rape of the Lock with the want of a moral, and for that reason sets it below the Lutrin, which exposes the pride and discord of the clergy. Perhaps neither Pope nor Boileau has made the world much

better than he found it; but if they had both succeeded, it were easy to tell who would have deserved most from publick gratitude. The freaks, and humours, and spleen, and vanity of women, as they embroil families in discord, and fill houses with disquiet, do more to obstruct the happiness of life in a year than the ambition of the clergy in many centuries. It has been well observed, that the misery of man proceeds not from any single crush of overwhelming evil, but from small vexations continually repeated.

It is remarked by Dennis likewise, that the machinery is superfluous; that, by all the bustle of preternatural operation, the main event is neither hastened nor retarded. To this charge an efficacious answer is not easily made. The sylphs cannot be said to help or to oppose; and it must be allowed to imply some want of art, that their power has not been sufficiently intermingled with the action. Other parts may, likewise, be charged with want of connexion; the game at *ombre* might be spared; but, if the lady had lost her hair while she was intent upon her cards, it might have been inferred that those who are too fond of play will be in danger of neglecting more important interests. Those, perhaps, are faults; but what are such faults to so much excellence?

The epistle of Eloise to Abelard is one of the most happy productions of human wit: the subject is so judiciously chosen, that it would be difficult, in turning over the annals of the world, to find another

which so many circumstances concur to recommend. We regularly interest ourselves most in the fortune of those who most deserve our notice. Abelard and Eloise were conspicuous in their days for eminence of merit. The heart naturally loves truth. The adventures and misfortunes of this illustrious pair are known from undisputed history. Their fate does not leave the mind in hopeless dejection; for they both found quiet and consolation in retirement and piety. So new and so affecting is their story, that it supersedes invention, and imagination ranges at full liberty without straggling into scenes of fable.

The story, thus skilfully adopted, has been diligently improved. Pope has left nothing behind him, which seems more the effect of studious perseverance and laborious revisal. Here is particularly observable the "curiosa felicitas," a fruitful soil and careful cultivation. Here is no crudeness of sense, nor asperity of language.

The sources from which sentiments, which have so much vigour and efficacy, have been drawn, are shown to be the mystick writers by the learned author of the Essay on the Life and Writings of Pope; a book which teaches how the brow of criticism may be smoothed, and how she may be enabled, with all her severity, to attract and to delight.

The train of my disquisition has now conducted me to that poetical wonder, the translation of the Iliad, a performance which no age or nation can pretend to equal. To the Greeks translation was almost unknown; it was totally unknown to the inhabitants

of Greece. They had no recourse to the barbarians for poetical beauties, but sought for every thing in Homer, where, indeed, there is but little that they might not find.

The Italians have been very diligent translators; but I can hear of no version, unless, perhaps, Anguillara's Ovid may be excepted, which is read with eagerness. The Iliad of Salvini every reader may discover to be punctiliously exact; but it seems to be the work of a linguist skilfully pedantick; and his countrymen, the proper judges of its power to please, reject it with disgust.

Their predecessors, the Romans, have left some specimens of translation behind them, and that employment must have had some credit in which Tully and Germanicus engaged; but, unless we suppose, what is perhaps true, that the plays of Terence were versions of Menander, nothing translated seems ever to have risen to high reputation. The French, in the meridian hour of their learning, were very laudably industrious to enrich their own language with the wisdom of the ancients; but found themselves reduced, by whatever necessity, to turn the Greek and Roman poetry into prose. Whoever could read an author, could translate him. From such rivals little can be feared.

The chief help of Pope in this arduous undertaking was drawn from the versions of Dryden. Virgil had borrowed much of his imagery from Homer, and part of the debt was now paid by his translator. Pope searched the pages of Dryden for happy com-

binations of heroick diction; but it will not be denied that he added much to what he found. He cultivated our language with so much diligence and art, that he has left in his Homer a treasure of poetical elegancies to posterity. His version may be said to have turned the English tongue; for, since its appearance, no writer, however deficient in other powers, has wanted melody. Such a series of lines, so elaborately corrected, and so sweetly modulated, took possession of the publick ear; the vulgar was enamoured of the poem, and the learned wondered at the translation.

But in the most general applause discordant voices will always be heard. It has been objected, by some who wish to be numbered among the sons of learning, that Pope's version of Homer is not Homerical; that it exhibits no resemblance of the original and characteristick manner of the father of poetry, as it wants his awful simplicity, his artless grandeur, his unaffected majesty . This cannot be totally denied; but it must be remembered that "necessitas quod cogit defendit;" that may be

[a] Bentley was one of these. He and Pope, soon after the publication of Homer, met at Dr. Mead's at dinner; when Pope, desirous of his opinion of the translation, addressed him thus: "Dr. Bentley, I ordered my bookseller to send you your books: I hope you received them." Bentley, who had purposely avoided saying any thing about Homer, pretended not to understand him, and asked, "Books! books! what books?"—"My Homer," replied Pope, "which you did me the honour to subscribe for."—"Oh," said Bentley, "aye, now I recollect—your translation:—it is a pretty poem, Mr. Pope; but you must not call it Homer." H.

Some good remarks on Pope's translation may be found in the work of Melmoth, entitled Fitzosborne's Letters. Ed.

lawfully done which cannot be forborne. Time and place will always enforce regard. In estimating this translation, consideration must be had of the nature of our language, the form of our metre, and, above all, of the change which two thousand years have made in the modes of life and the habits of thought. Virgil wrote in a language of the same general fabrick with that of Homer, in verses of the same measure, and in an age nearer to Homer's time by eighteen hundred years; yet he found, even then, the state of the world so much altered, and the demand for elegance so much increased, that mere nature would be endured no longer; and, perhaps, in the multitude of borrowed passages, very few can be shown which he has not embellished.

There is a time when nations, emerging from barbarity, and falling into regular subordination, gain leisure to grow wise, and feel the shame of ignorance and the craving pain of unsatisfied curiosity. To this hunger of the mind plain sense is grateful; that which fills the void removes uneasiness, and to be free from pain for awhile is pleasure; but repletion generates fastidiousness; a saturated intellect soon becomes luxurious, and knowledge finds no willing reception till it is recommended by artificial diction. Thus it will be found, in the progress of learning, that in all nations the first writers are simple, and that every age improves in elegance. One refinement always makes way for another; and what was expedient to Virgil, was necessary to Pope.

I suppose many readers of the English Iliad, when they have been touched with some unexpected beauty of the lighter kind, have tried to enjoy it in the original, where, alas! it was not to be found. Homer, doubtless, owes to his translator many Ovidian graces not exactly suitable to his character; but to have added can be no great crime, if nothing be taken away. Elegance is surely to be desired, if it be not gained at the expense of dignity. A hero would wish to be loved, as well as to be reverenced.

To a thousand cavils one answer is sufficient; the purpose of a writer is to be read, and the criticism which would destroy the power of pleasing must be blown aside. Pope wrote for his own age and his own nation: he knew that it was necessary to colour the images and point the sentiments of his author; he, therefore, made him graceful, but lost him some of his sublimity.

The copious notes with which the version is accompanied, and by which it is recommended to many readers, though they were undoubtedly written to swell the volumes, ought not to pass without praise: commentaries which attract the reader by the pleasure of perusal have not often appeared; the notes of others are read to clear difficulties, those of Pope to vary entertainment.

It has, however, been objected, with sufficient reason, that there is in the commentary too much of unseasonable levity and affected gaiety; that too many appeals are made to the ladies, and the ease which is so carefully preserved is, sometimes, the

ease of a trifler. Every art has its terms, and every kind of instruction its proper style; the gravity of common criticks may be tedious, but is less despicable than childish merriment.

Of the Odyssey, nothing remains to be observed: the same general praise may be given to both translations, and a particular examination of either would require a large volume. The notes were written by Broome, who endeavoured, not unsuccessfully, to imitate his master.

Of the Dunciad, the hint is confessedly taken from Dryden's Mac Flecknoe; but the plan is so enlarged and diversified, as justly to claim the praise of an original, and affords the best specimen that has yet appeared of personal satire ludicrously pompous.

That the design was moral, whatever the author might tell either his readers or himself, I am not convinced. The first motive was the desire of revenging the contempt with which Theobald had treated his Shakespeare, and regaining the honour which he had lost, by crushing his opponent. Theobald was not of bulk enough to fill a poem, and, therefore, it was necessary to find other enemies with other names, at whose expense he might divert the publick.

In this design there was petulance and malignity enough; but I cannot think it very criminal. An author places himself uncalled before the tribunal of criticism, and solicits fame at the hazard of disgrace. Dulness or deformity are not culpable in themselves,

but may be very justly reproached when they pretend to the honour of wit or the influence of beauty. If bad writers were to pass without reprehension, what should restrain them? "impune diem consumpserit ingens Telephus;" and upon bad writers only will censure have much effect. The satire which brought Theobald and Moore into contempt, dropped impotent from Bentley, like the javelin of Priam.

All truth is valuable, and satirical criticism may be considered as useful when it rectifies errour and improves judgment; he that refines the publick taste is a publick benefactor.

The beauties of this poem are well known; its chief fault is the grossness of its images. Pope and Swift had an unnatural delight in ideas physically impure, such as every other tongue utters with unwillingness, and of which every ear shrinks from the mention.

But even this fault, offensive as it is, may be forgiven for the excellence of other passages; such as the formation and dissolution of Moore, the account of the traveller, the misfortune of the florist, and the crowded thoughts and stately numbers which dignify the concluding paragraph.

The alterations which have been made in the Dunciad, not always for the better, require that it should be published, as in the present collection, with all its variations.

The Essay on Man was a work of great labour and long consideration, but certainly not the hap-

piest of Pope's performances. The subject is, perhaps, not very proper for poetry, and the poet was not sufficiently master of his subject; metaphysical morality was to him a new study; he was proud of his acquisitions, and, supposing himself master of great secrets, was in haste to teach what he had not learned. Thus he tells us, in the first epistle, that from the nature of the supreme being may be deduced an order of beings such as mankind, because infinite excellence can do only what is best. He finds out that these beings must be "somewhere;" and that "all the question is, whether man be in a wrong place." Surely if, according to the poet's Leibnitzian reasoning, we may infer that man ought to be, only because he is, we may allow that his place is the right place, because he has it. Supreme wisdom is not less infallible in disposing than in creating. But what is meant by "somewhere" and "place," and "wrong place," it had been vain to ask Pope, who, probably, had never asked himself.

Having exalted himself into the chair of wisdom, he tells us much that every man knows, and much that he does not know himself; that we see but little, and that the order of the universe is beyond our comprehension; an opinion not very uncommon: and that there is a chain of subordinate beings "from infinite to nothing," of which himself and his readers are equally ignorant. But he gives us one comfort, which, without his help, he supposes unattainable, in the position "that though we are fools, yet God is wise."

This essay affords an egregious instance of the

predominance of genius, the dazzling splendour of imagery, and the seductive powers of eloquence. Never were penury of knowledge and vulgarity of sentiment so happily disguised. The reader feels his mind full, though he learns nothing; and, when he meets it in its new array, no longer knows the talk of his mother and his nurse. When these wonder-working sounds sink into sense, and the doctrine of the essay, disrobed of its ornaments, is left to the powers of its naked excellence, what shall we discover? That we are, in comparison with our creator, very weak and ignorant; that we do not uphold the chain of existence; and that we could not make one another with more skill than we are made. We may learn yet more: that the arts of human life were copied from the instinctive operations of other animals; that if the world be made for man, it may be said that man was made for geese. To these profound principles of natural knowledge are added some moral instructions equally new; that self-interest, well understood, will produce social concord; that men are mutual gainers by mutual benefits; that evil is sometimes balanced by good; that human advantages are unstable and fallacious, of uncertain duration and doubtful effect; that our true honour is, not to have a great part, but to act it well; that virtue only is our own; and that happiness is always in our power.

Surely a man of no very comprehensive search may venture to say that he has heard all this before; but it was never till now recommended by such a

blaze of embellishment, or such sweetness of melody. The vigorous contraction of some thoughts, the luxuriant amplification of others, the incidental illustrations, and sometimes the dignity, sometimes the softness of the verses, enchain philosophy, suspend criticism, and oppress judgment by overpowering pleasure.

This is true of many paragraphs; yet if I had undertaken to exemplify Pope's felicity of composition before a rigid critick, I should not select the Essay on Man; for it contains more lines unsuccessfully laboured, more harshness of diction, more thoughts imperfectly expressed, more levity without elegance, and more heaviness without strength, than will easily be found in all his other works.

The Characters of Men and Women are the product of diligent speculation upon human life: much labour has been bestowed upon them, and Pope very seldom laboured in vain. That his excellence may be properly estimated, I recommend a comparison of his Characters of Women with Boileau's Satire; it will then be seen with how much more perspicacity female nature is investigated, and female excellence selected; and he surely is no mean writer to whom Boileau shall be found inferiour. The Characters of Men, however, are written with more, if not with deeper, thought, and exhibit many passages exquisitely beautiful. The Gem and the Flower will not easily be equalled. In the women's part are some defects: the character of Atossa is not so neatly finished as that of

Clodio; and some of the female characters may be found, perhaps, more frequently among men; what is said of Philomede was true of Prior.

In the epistles to lord Bathurst and lord Burlington, Dr. Warburton has endeavoured to find a train of thought which was never in the writer's head, and, to support his hypothesis, has printed that first which was published last. In one, the most valuable passage is, perhaps, the Elogy on good Sense; and the other, the End of the Duke of Buckingham.

The epistle to Arbuthnot, now arbitrarily called the Prologue to the Satires, is a performance consisting, as it seems, of many fragments wrought into one design, which, by this union of scattered beauties, contains more striking paragraphs than could, probably, have been brought together into an occasional work. As there is no stronger motive to exertion than self-defence, no part has more elegance, spirit, or dignity, than the poet's vindication of his own character. The meanest passage is the satire upon Sporus.

Of the two poems which derived their names from the year, and which are called the Epilogue to the Satires, it was very justly remarked by Savage, that the second was, in the whole, more strongly conceived, and more equally supported, but that it had no single passages equal to the contention in the first for the dignity of vice, and the celebration of the triumph of corruption.

The imitations of Horace seem to have been

written as relaxations of his genius. This employment became his favourite by its facility; the plan was ready to his hand, and nothing was required but to accommodate, as he could, the sentiments of an old author, to recent facts or familiar images; but what is easy is seldom excellent; such imitations cannot give pleasure to common readers; the man of learning may be sometimes surprised and delighted by an unexpected parallel; but the comparison requires knowledge of the original, which will likewise often detect strained applications. Between Roman images and English manners, there will be an irreconcilable dissimilitude, and the work will be generally uncouth and party-coloured; neither original nor translated, neither ancient nor modern[b].

Pope had, in proportions very nicely adjusted to each other, all the qualities that constitute genius. He had invention, by which new trains of events are formed, and new scenes of imagery displayed,

[b] In one of these poems is a couplet, to which belongs a story that I once heard the reverend Dr. Ridley relate:

"Slander or poison dread from Delia's rage;
Hard words, or hanging, if your judge be * * * *."

Sir Francis Page, a judge well known in his time, conceiving that his name was meant to fill up the blank, sent his clerk to Mr. Pope, to complain of the insult. Pope told the young man that the blank might be supplied by many monosyllables, other than the judge's name:—"but, sir," said the clerk, "the judge says that no other word will make sense of the passage."—"So then it seems," says Pope, "your master is not only a judge but a poet; as that is the case, the odds are against me. Give my respects to the judge, and tell him, I will not contend with one that has the advantage of me, and he may fill up the blank as he pleases." H.

as in the Rape of the Lock; and by which extrinsick and adventitious embellishments and illustrations are connected with a known subject, as in the Essay on Criticism. He had imagination, which strongly impresses on the writer's mind, and enables him to convey to the reader, the various forms of nature, incidents of life, and energies of passion, as in his Eloisa, Windsor Forest, and Ethick Epistles. He had judgment, which selects from life or nature what the present purpose requires, and by separating the essence of things from its concomitants, often makes the representation more powerful than the reality: and he had colours of language always before him, ready to decorate his matter with every grace of elegant expression, as when he accommodates his diction to the wonderful multiplicity of Homer's sentiments and descriptions.

Poetical expression includes sounds as well as meaning; "Musick," says Dryden, "is inarticulate poetry;" among the excellencies of Pope, therefore, must be mentioned the melody of his metre. By perusing the works of Dryden, he discovered the most perfect fabrick of English verse, and habituated himself to that only which he found the best; in consequence of which restraint, his poetry has been censured as too uniformly musical, and as glutting the ear with unvaried sweetness. I suspect this objection to be the cant of those who judge by principles rather than perception; and who would even themselves have less pleasure in his works, if he had

tried to relieve attention by studied discords, or affected to break his lines and vary his pauses.

But, though he was thus careful of his versification, he did not oppress his powers with superfluous rigour. He seems to have thought, with Boileau, that the practice of writing might be refined till the difficulty should overbalance the advantage. The construction of his language is not always strictly grammatical; with those rhymes, which prescription had conjoined, he contented himself, without regard to Swift's remonstrances, though there was no striking consonance; nor was he very careful to vary his terminations, or to refuse admission, at a small distance, to the same rhymes.

To Swift's edict, for the exclusion of alexandrines and triplets, he paid little regard; he admitted them, but, in the opinion of Fenton, too rarely; he uses them more liberally in his translation than his poems.

He has a few double rhymes; and always, I think, unsuccessfully, except once in the Rape of the Lock.

Expletives he very early ejected from his verses; but he now and then admits an epithet rather commodious than important. Each of the six first lines of the Iliad might lose two syllables with very little diminution of the meaning; and sometimes, after all his art and labour, one verse seems to be made for the sake of another. In his latter productions the diction is sometimes vitiated by French idioms, with which Bolingbroke had, perhaps, infected him.

I have been told, that the couplet by which he declared his own ear to be most gratified, was this:

> Lo, where Mæotis sleeps, and hardly flows
> The freezing Tanais through a waste of snows.

But the reason of this preference I cannot discover.

It is remarked by Watts, that there is scarcely a happy combination of words, or a phrase poetically elegant, in the English language, which Pope has not inserted into his version of Homer. How he obtained possession of so many beauties of speech, it were desirable to know. That he gleaned from authors, obscure as well as eminent, what he thought brilliant or useful, and preserved it all in a regular collection, is not unlikely. When, in his last years, Hall's Satires were shown him, he wished that he had seen them sooner.

New sentiments, and new images, others may produce; but to attempt any farther improvement of versification will be dangerous. Art and diligence have now done their best, and what shall be added will be the effort of tedious toil and needless curiosity.

After all this, it is, surely, superfluous to answer the question that has once been asked, whether Pope was a poet? otherwise than by asking in return, if Pope be not a poet, where is poetry to be found? To circumscribe poetry by a definition, will only show the narrowness of the definer, though a definition, which shall exclude Pope, will not easily be made. Let us look round upon the present time, and back upon the past; let us inquire to whom the

voice of mankind has decreed the wreath of poetry; let their productions be examined, and their claims stated, and the pretensions of Pope will be no more disputed. Had he given the world only his version, the name of poet must have been allowed him: if the writer of the Iliad were to class his successors, he would assign a very high place to his translator, without requiring any other evidence of genius.

The following Letter, of which the original is in the hands of lord Hardwicke, was communicated to me by the kindness of Mr. Jodrell.

"To Mr. Bridges, at the bishop of London's, at Fulham.

"Sir,—The favour of your letter, with your remarks, can never be enough acknowledged; and the speed with which you discharged so troublesome a task, doubles the obligation.

"I must own, you have pleased me very much by the commendations so ill bestowed upon me; but, I assure you, much more by the frankness of your censure, which I ought to take the more kindly of the two, as it is more advantageous to a scribbler to be improved in his judgment, than to be soothed in his vanity. The greater part of those deviations from the Greek, which you have observed, I was led into by Chapman and Hobbes; who are, it seems, as much celebrated for their knowledge of the original, as they are decried for the badness of their translations. Chapman pretends to have re-

stored the genuine sense of the author, from the mistakes of all former explainers, in several hundred places; and the Cambridge editors of the large Homer, in Greek and Latin, attributed so much to Hobbes, that they confess they have corrected the old Latin interpretation, very often by his version. For my part, I generally took the author's meaning to be as you have explained it; yet their authority, joined to the knowledge of my own imperfectness in the language, overruled me. However, sir, you may be confident I think you in the right, because you happen to be of my opinion: for men (let them say what they will) never approve any other's sense, but as it squares with their own. But you have made me much more proud of, and positive in, my judgment, since it is strengthened by yours. I think your criticisms, which regard the expression, very just, and shall make my profit of them: to give you some proof that I am in earnest, I will alter three verses on your bare objection, though I have Mr. Dryden's example for each of them. And this, I hope, you will account no small piece of obedience, from one, who values the authority of one true poet above that of twenty criticks or commentators. But, though I speak thus of commentators. I will continue to read carefully all I can procure, to make up, that way, for my own want of critical understanding in the original beauties of Homer. Though the greatest of them are certainly those of the invention and design, which are not at all confined to the language: for the distinguishing excellencies of

Homer are (by the consent of the best criticks of all nations) first in the manners, (which include all the speeches, as being no other than the representations of each person's manners by his words;) and then in that rapture and fire, which carries you away with him, with that wonderful force, that no man, who has a true poetical spirit, is master of himself, while he reads him. Homer makes you interested and concerned before you are aware, all at once; whereas, Virgil does it by soft degrees. This, I believe, is what a translator of Homer ought, principally, to imitate; and it is very hard for any translator to come up to it, because the chief reason, why all translations fall short of their originals is, that the very constraint they are obliged to, renders them heavy and dispirited.

"The great beauty of Homer's language, as I take it, consists in that noble simplicity which runs through all his works; (and yet his diction, contrary to what one would imagine consistent with simplicity, is, at the same time, very copious.) I don't know how I have run into this pedantry in a letter, but I find I have said too much, as well as spoken too inconsiderately; what farther thoughts I have upon this subject, I shall be glad to communicate to you, for my own improvement, when we meet; which is a happiness I very earnestly desire, as I do likewise some opportunity of proving how much I think myself obliged to your friendship, and how truly I am, sir,

"Your most faithful, humble servant,

"A. Pope."

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